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Spring (October-December) issue 74 \$7.50* NZ \$9.50 (incl GST)

Cover Up the creek! Jeff Wright and Roger Beahan walking in the dry Picaninny Creek, Purnululu (Bungle Bungle) National Park, northern Western Australia Steven Nowakowski

WARNING The activities covered in this magazine are dangerous proper training, experience, skill, regard to safety, and equipment could result in serious injury or death

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Who decides what you read?

Editorial independence isn't something you can always bank on

As I watte THIS EDITIONAL, THE WELL-THE SECONDAL, THE WELL-THE SECONDAL THE WELL-THE SECONDAL THE SECONDAL TH

Much of the press's considerable interest has centred on whether Laws, or his representatives, approached the banks to propose the arrangement or vice versa. Either way, the issue is that a radio commentator allegedly entered a contract to receive payment to influence the way he spoke on matters of public interest. This comment appart of the radio station's 'editorial' content as distinct from its readily identifiable paid advertising.

Blatant and significant though it may be, the Laws problem is hardly unique. Every medium which relies on sponsorship by advertises, including the print medium of which Wild is part, is potentially subject to the possibility of compromised editorial interity. It's an unusual and brave publisher who allows his or her editorial staff to publish criticism of a major advertiser's product or service. Indeed, not only are many unable to take such a stand but they actively sell edit-orial space and editorial integrity in return for paid advertiser's part or return for paid advertiser's part of the product of the product

Not a few advertisers are of the opinion that special-interest magazines exist primarily to support them ('the industry'). In their mids, responsibility to readers is not really part of the equation. Many publishers do not discourage this view. Advertisers are readily "sweetned by offers not only of substantial discounts but also of 'editoral support'—a euphemism for at times extensive and invariably favourable reportage of advertiser's products and services. This

GST

The recent passing of GST legislation means that a new tax takes effect with Wild no 78. It will apply to all copies of Wild—whether purchased over the counter or on subscription funless the subscription payment was received before 2 December 1998). See the announcements opposite the Wild and Rock order forms bound into this issue.

'support' by the publication in question frequently includes photographing advertisers' products and assigning professional writers to generate stories about them. Feature articles are selected for their potential to attract advertising rather than for their appeal to readers. Advertisers are even encouraged to pay directly for special 'editorial' coverage such as having their product highlighted on the letters page as the prize for the 'letter of the month', or selected for inclusion in a 'special feature' of products recommended as suitable Christmas presents. Often, such arrangements are designed to remain undetected by readers. As for rejecting misleading advertising or advertising for products of questionable merit, or publishing critical reviews of advertisers' products and services, forget it! Unfortunately, such practices are widespread. There are, in fact, some relatively readerless magazines where the advertising 'tail' wags the magazine 'dog'.

The publisher who tries diligently to run an entirely ethical show has to be both single-minded and vigilant to adhere to such a course. It takes a very special determination not to listen most sympathetically to the complaints or entreaties of a major advertiser who pays a large part of the publisher's bill!

Hardly a day passes when I'm not obliged to make a choice, often at a deceptively simple level, between the 'easy' way of acceding to a request or demand that 'solves' a problem (such as one from a wavering potential advertiser) in the short term, and the 'hard' way which often produces stress or conflict. And a problem is that benefice aemed from consistently choosing her later course over some years can be tom down in a flash by even the shortest detour on to the 'easy' way. Even if you are firmly focused on winning the 'war' you take a lot of blows and lose some battles—not to mention and lose some battles—not to mention experience many doubts—along the way.

In reality, however, it's not much of a choice. A magarine like Wild exists primarily for its readers. If they are sufficiently numerous and have enough trust in the magazine's independence and credibility, it is they who make the magazine an effective medium for those advertisers who have something relevant and worth while to offer them. In that process readers assist the magazine to earn crucial advertising revenue which, in turn, can be used to make the magazine more appealing to readers. It's a cycle of dependence. Abuse it or break it and sooner or later the whole thing collapses in a heap. ◆

e whole thing collapses in a heap. **U** Chris Baxter







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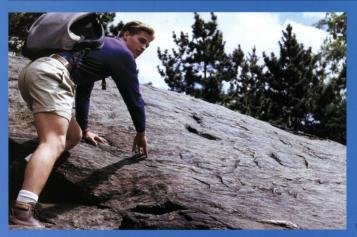
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Give us divity old men!

'Dirty young girl' gets her going

I was interested to read the Letter by Jan Lancaster in Wild no 72. I empathise with the thoughts and emotions expressed in this letter because I, too, am a bush-

walker of mature(ish) years.

However, I was also once a young bush-

walker who thought being young and very fit was everything, so I do not feel personally miffed by photos of youth on Wild covers. We have all had our turn at being young. And they will (with luck) have their turn at being old.

It was good though to see on issue 72's cover, not a clean young person, but a dirty young girl? She even looked as though she had been doing something and not just hanging around with all her wonderful 'in' sear. Jooking beautiful.

Perhaps on one of your future issues you could feature a dirty old woman or a dirty old woman or a dirty old man! A sprightly one, of course, in either new or old gear, who may even look as though she, or he, could theaven forbidly walk the legs off some of those clean young people. It might even sell more magazines to that large proportion of bushwalkers who are no longer young in looks, but always young at heart.

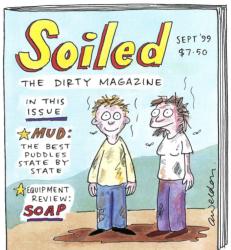
Happy walking to the young, the old, and the in-betweens.

Sue Hope Olsen Blackheath, NSW

Nice girls

Having read Jackie Kiewa's article You Won't Meet Any Nice Girls Out There' in Wild no 72, it is encouraging to see some attention paid to us outdoors women. Now in my mid-20s, I first ventured into the great outdoors at 16 with nine friends. By the end of high school we had many walks and much experience under our belts, cul-minating in our walk from Kiandra to Mt Kosciuszko. I remember clearly the bemused looks and raised eyebrows as we arrived in Thredbo at the end of our journey; What's a group of girls doing walking that far?

While my friends and I no longer enjoy sojourns in the High Country together, I am fortunate to have a partner who is as passionate about walking and cross country sking as I am. In summer we hike throught out the High Country, and in witner ski the back country of the Snowy Mountains. I have experienced the physical and emotional highs and lows of walking from K to K, spent the coldest night of my life camped



in the snow at Four Mile Hut and carved my first Tele turn on Mt Carruthers.

I may not be able to carry the same amount of weight in my pack as my partners in crime, but the enjoyment I experience from doing what I love doing and knowing that I am physically capable of doing makes it all worth the blisters, bruises and encounters with March flies with a well developed resistance to tropical-strength Aeropaard...

Why should the guys have all the fun?

Jennifer Dunn

Calwell, ACT

As a regular solo Tasmanian bushwalker, I was rapt to read your article 'You Won't Meet Any Nice Girls Out There'.

The great majority of people I meet or know disapprove of my 'habit'. Solo male walkers do not suffer the same criticisms that I do even though I am often far better equipped.

Janet Wilson Devonport, Tas

Wong again

In response to Michael Wong's letter in Wild no 73: He got it Wong!

The Chapmans may have rocks in their heads, but the bushwalkers with us on the two club trips I led along the same route to the Crinoline that Michael Wong writes about would probably take exception to being told that they had rocks in theirs!

Reaching the camp-site on the first trip, we discovered that there was no water (hence John's remark about the water supply). As it was only mid-afternoon we descended to the Caledonia River with time to establish camp before dark. On the sec-

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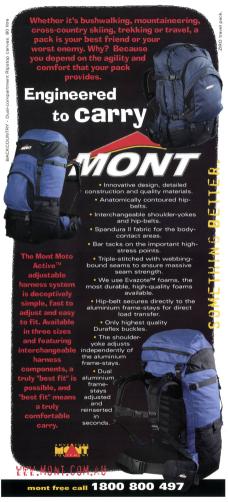
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ond trip we camped on top, reaching the camp-site later than expected (about 6 pm) as it had been close to 30°C that day.

The introduction to the walk itself in the guidebook clearly states that the 'first day's walk is marked as a suggested route on the Brookes map.' There are also several other references to the term 'route' in the notes. Experienced walkers know the difference between a route and a track.

I agree with the writer's last comment that it is possible that his party's 'general fitness is not up to scratch'! If they found the spur steep, I'd strongly advise them to stay away from any places John describes as 'very steep'.

> Monica Chapman Kew Fast Vic

GST dreamtime

The arrival of each edition of Wild introduces an 'only if' or 'dream on' response for those of us who sometimes feel trapped by the parental merry-go-round of taking kids to sporting events every weekend.

Although we have had some success in introducing our children from aged 10 and 121 to the great outdoors (notable family achievements include MB Bruce in northern Australia, MI Feathertop, and the Greryl), they themselves would never suge gest a weekend away and they regularly lament how unfortunate they are for having "mad" parents.

Well, magic happens! As the nation had to endure the birth of the CST deal, we were able to escape on a GST (Great Short Trip). The Bogong High Plains in the last week of autumn—absolute bliss, and no kids!...

of autumn—absolute biss, and no kids!...
So as a message to all those potentially frustrated Wild parents—hang in, and enjoy the stimulus provided by each edition of Wild, and may your GST be round the next

! George John Highett, Vic

Instant roof

After reading the article on one-person shelters in *Wild* no 72,1 thought I'd write to tell you how I extend or improve the versatility of my bivvy-bag.

I have a J & H Hollow Log Gore-Tex bag which I find quite roomy and comfortable, but as an extra, I sometimes also carry a lightweight plastic tarp (about 1800 x 1200 millimetres), and a few 'ocka' straps.

 I then plonk myself in amongst a few sturdy saplings and, bingo, instant roof.

It just gives me a little extra shelter if things get a bit damp, and it also helps to prevent a few of the night creatures from using my head as a landing pad...

Michael Reid Frankston, Vic

Readers' letters are welcome (with sender's full name and address for verification). A selection will be published in this column. Letters of less than 200 words are more likely to be printed. Write to the Editor, Wild, PO Box 415, Prahran, Vic 3181.



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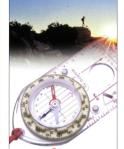
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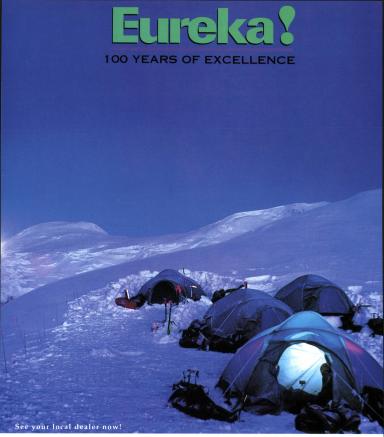
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Bland he gin't

A GO-AHEAD WAS RECENTLY GIVEN for a documentary to be made about Peter Bland, the first Australian to reach both the South and North Magnetic Poles. The documentary should screen on the ABC in January and will have the potential to be seen in about 75 million bomes worldwide.

It is remarkable that Bland reached the North Magnetic Pole only 12 months after major heart surgery. This was in February 1998 when he and four British men pulled sledges across the frozen Arctic Sea for 650 kilo-

Two years before, he and others had sailed to the South Magnetic Pole in an 18 metre sloop. During this trip he risked his life by diving overboard into the icy waters to cut a line free from the yacht's propeller.

On his return, Bland began to plan a visit to the North Magnetic Pole. However, it was discovered that he had a life-threatening aortic aneurysm, which had to be operated on as soon as possible. Specialists believe that he'd had this for about two years before the operation.

Thus his expedition to the North Magnetic Pole was postponed. His wife Julia said 'it won't be this year but it will be next year and it will be bigger and better and we'll raise money



Before...adventurer Peter Bland in intensive care at the Royal Melbourne Hospital immediately after major heart surgery in February 1997. Bland trained solidly for a year to rebuild his upper body before he travelled to the North Magnetic Pole. Both photos Peter Bland Collection for charity. This is what they did: before he went to the North Magnetic Pole they had raised \$40,000 for the Heart Foundation

Heart Foundation.
Apart from being the head of marketing for Multiple Sclerosis Victoria,
30-year-old Bland is sought after as a
professional motivational speaker. He
usagests that you's set a goal and go at
it and don't let adversity step in your
way. His formula for success consists
of 1, a goal; 2, a belief; 3, teamwork
and 4, preparation. He says that success breeds success, and a 'no' must
be believed or it can be easily discarded at the first obstacle. In really
a big believer of setting your sights on
something and not wavering on at'
Cobviously.

After...Bland at the North Magnetic Pole a year later, February 1998. Attached to the ski pole is Douglas Mawson's Australian flag. (In 1908 Mawson become the first Australian to reach the South Magnetic Pole.) Mawson is a great hero of Bland's.



Enough Said





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Cooleman Caves explained



When you visit the Blue Waterholes area in the Kosciuszko National Park, New South Wales, you won't need a sign to tell you that this feature is Cooleman Creek Gorge, Chris Baxter

The New South Wales National Parks & Wildlife Service has placed interpretation signs at various points in the Blue Waterholes area of the Kosciuszko National Park. It is hoped that the signs will promote awareness of karst and other environmental features along the Clarke and Nicoles Gorge walks. These tracks are named the Jennings Walk in recognition of the 30 years of study in the area by the late Joe Jennings, who

morphologist (see Wild no 15). Stephen Bunton

was Australia's most eminent karst geo-

alarm. The ensuing rescue was effected in rainy, blustery conditions and took most of the night.

Beth Treseder

Border Challenge

Anthony Evans and Helen Wilson were the Individual Male and Female winners of the Border Challenge multisport race in Albury-Wodonga, NSW and Victorian border, on 3 April, John Jacoby and Russell Newnham were second and third, respectively, in the former event; Jenny Kromar came second in the latter. Dougal Ferguson won the Veteran Males' race.

Poms strut their stuff

In March the UK Government indicated that it will introduce legislation to give walkers greater access to 1.6 million hectares of the countryside. At present massive areas of semi-wilderness which are not being farmed and are largely unused are closed off to recreational walkers because the land is private property. John Southalan

CROG

A young woman died after a bushwalking accident in the popular Cathedral Ranges, north-east of Mel-

Kiwi kross kountry

A 1400 kilometre walking track now spans the length of New Zealand's South Island, linking seven of the country's nine top tracks. The route extends from Farewell Spit in the north to Bluff in the south, and links the Abel Tasman, Milford, Routeburn, Kepler, Heaphy, Nelson Lakes and St James tracks. It would take about 120 days to complete. See www.tearoroa.org.nz

Treseder to the rescue again

In April endurance athlete Peter Treseder rescued two women who were trapped in Gordon Smith Chimney, an access route through the cliffs on Mt Banks in the Blue Mountains National Park, NSW. One of the women had slipped while abseiling and fallen to the end of the rope where a knot stopped her from falling all the way to the valley floor. However, she knocked herself unconscious and ended up hanging hundreds of metres above the ground. The woman who went to her aid got stuck and ended up being trapned as well. The third woman raised the

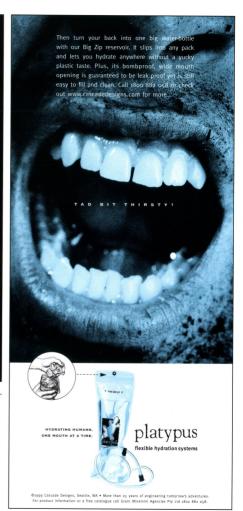
Wild Diary listings provide informati write. Leary mange provide information about ruckspressports events and instruction courses run commercial organisations. Send items for publication to the Editor, Wild, PO Box 415, Prahran, Vic 3181. 25 Spring 12-hr R 24 VBCE white-water 25-26 VBCE river rescue III course SA (08) 8258 5696 Vic (03) 9459 4277 vanced award (25-26 NSWBCE white-water Vic (03) 9459 4277 29-31 CAAO Adelaide Trailwalker B instructor course C NSW (02) 6649 4155 30-31 VBCE river rescue III course C SA (08) 8223 3405 26 ESP Tallarook Traverse Vic (03) 9459 4277 Vic (02) 6259 9555 (Seymour) M VBCE basic skills October Vic (03) 9459 4277 2-3 Perisher Cup S nstructor intake C 6-7 VCC beginners' and NSW (02) 9552 2701 3 VBCE white-water lead-climbing course (week three) RC Vic (03) 8661 1349 Vic (03) 9459 4277 proficiency test C 4 VBCE river rescue I course C 7 Metrogaine 6-hr R 7-9 Snow & Outdoor Vic (03) 9459 4277 SE Qld (07) 3369 1641 13-14 VBCE SunSmart intro Trade Show (traders only) Vic (03) 9879 8677 to canoeing C Vic (03) 9459 4277 VBCE sea instructor 17-18 VBCE SunSmart intro (twilight) C Vic (03) 9459 4277 Vic (03) 9459 4277 VBCE white-water ACT (02) 6268 8734 20 12-hr R structor assessment Vic (03) 9459 4277 9-10 VCC beginners' and 20-21 VBCE basic skills instructor Vic (03) 9718 2753 lead-climbing course Vic (03) 8661 1349 Vic (03) 9459 4277 (week one) RC 24-25 VBCE SunSmart intro (twilight) C Vic (03) 9459 4277 16-17 NSWBCE Learn to kayak C 27-28 CE Jones Lang LaSalle 16-17 VBCE SunSmart intro NSW (02) 6649 4155 Vic (02) 9997 7470 Challenge (fg as the JLW Challenge) M Vic (03) 9459 4277 to canon 23 12-hr R 28 VBCE Come n try canoeing day C Vic (03) 9459 4277 23-24 Australian Champs 24-hr R WA (08) 9381 8608 December (Wodonga) Vic (02) 6025 4959 4-S VBCE SunSmart intro 23-24 VCC beginners' and to canoeing C Vic (03) 9459 4277 lead-climbing course (week two) RC Vic (03) 8661 1349 4-5 VBCE white-water Vic (03) 9459 4277 24 ESP Capital Challenge M proficiency test C ACT (02) 6259 9555 NSWBCE white-water proficiency course C NSW (02) 6649 4155

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bourne, on 10 July, reported Melbourne's Herald Sun. Simone Richardson, 21, died after losing her footing and falling several metres down a cliff. She had only recently triumphed over injuries from a near-fatal car accident 18 months before.

- In April Peter Treseder reduced his remarkable 1987 Three Peaks (southern Blue Mountains, NSW) record of 14 hours and 30 minutes to 14 hours and 19 minutes. This is the fifth time he has reset this record.
- John Chapman tells us that the road to Johnny Souey Cove in the northern section of Wilsons Promontory. Victoria, has been permanently closed. The camp-site at the cove has also been temporarily closed. It will be reopened when a new walking track from Five Mile Beach to the cove is built. Permit prices for the Prom have risen to \$8.00 a car plus \$4.10 a person a night for bushwalking.
- Five of 'the best adventure films in the world' from the Banff Mountain Film Festival in Canada will soon be screened here. Catch the films at the Metro Theatre in Sydney from 3 -7 pm on 21 November, and at the Melbourne Exhibition Centre Auditorium from 2 -6 pm on 27 November. For information or tickets telephone (02) 4787 1128.
- Complete 100 kilometres of the famous **Heysen Trail**, South Australia, in just 48 hours and raise money for people in need. The Adelaide Trailwalker **team event** is on 29–31 October. Phone Community Aid Abroad Oxfam on (08) 8223 3405.

Corrections and amplifications

The Sherpa thermal underwear advertisement on page 20 of Wild no 73 claims that the gaments are made of polypropylene. When that issue was published, and at the time of writing, the only Sherpa underwear available in Australian outdoors shops was made of polyester, not polypropylene.

David Innes informs us that the 1646 metre knoll mentioned in the caption on page 59 of Wild no 73 was officially named Mt Wongungarra in 1995 by Place Names Victoria

Nick Toozoff tells us that the cartridge capacity figures in the water purifiers and filters survey in Wild no 72 may be misleading. He says that cartridge capacity depends on the quality of water used and on whether or not the cartridge can be cleaned.

Readers' contributions to this department, including colour slides, are welcome. Typed items of less than 200 words are more likely to be printed. Send them to the Editor, Wild, PO Box 415, Prahran, Vic 3181.

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Two men in a leaky boat

Quentin Chester goes bushwalking with a dinghy

'WHATEVER YOU JUST DID-DON'T DO IT again', spluttered Peter as he lay in the cockpit of my small sailing dinghy. Several bags and rucksacks were also floating in the water that had sloshed into the boat. Unsure just what I'd done, I gave my best impersonation of a deranged captain instead: 'Man the pumps! Women and children first!' I shouted. Before Peter could find his prescription Ray Bans, let alone the bailing bucket, another gust of wind hit the sails. The boat heeled alarmingly. My drenched crew clung bravely to the mast and hundreds of litres of water spilled miraculously from the cockpit. But then there was a sudden thwack followed by a mad flapping noise. 'Peter', I said, trying to sound calm, 'I think we've just lost the jib.

Fortunately, when travelling on the slene lagoon in South Australia's Coorong National Park, land is never far away. A few minutes later we were string in sunlight on a curve of beach. With a steep dune a tour backs and the wind jostling overhead, we stared out across the dark, choppy water. For a long time I considered the form sail on my lap. Not far away stood a sorry stack of sodden bags and supplies. A hasty pretrip repair to the dingity's bow also needed oxplaining to my crew. It was not exactly awining start to a week of sailing and walk-

Ing. "all this wasn't enough, beads of rain began to tumble out of the sky. Heavy clouds moved in and we scrambled among the state of the sky. The sky clouds the sky of the sky. The sky of the sky o

The Coorong is an odd place With nearly 47 000 hectares of coastal park less than two hours from Adelaide it might seem to have a lot going for it. There in indeed times and places here in which the sensations of wildness—the bellowing surf, the plumes of wind-driven sand, the wild screech of sea birds—are as piquant as anything in the country. And yet, the area has few visitors and hardly any bushwalkers.

Part of the oddness is topographical. The Coorong is delineated by a great arm of



sand curving 140 kilometres south-east to north-west along the South Australian coast. If Fraser Island were put on a rack, it might look like this. To the west of this giant bread stick of a peninsula thunders the Southern Ocean; to the east lies a slender lagoon. Though barely a kilometre or two wide, this natural moat deters many prospective travellers.

There are other difficulties as well. The peninsula has few natural highlights to give shape to an itinerary. The dunescapes have as amenes, a befuddling succession of crests and blasted hollows. And for all the Coorong's wild facets you are never totally removed from the trammelled world. Several times a day you'll hear the grumble of an outboard. Moreover, much of the Coorong's eastern shore is flanked by Highway I. Moving along the lagoon it begins to feel as though you're inhabiting parallel worlds, the Southern Ocean booming on one side and big, shiny Kenworths rumbling along on the other.

Sill, if you have some form of boat, barque, coracle or junk it is possible to undertake an exploration of sorts. The pattern of these trips usually entails cruising along the lagoon, rudging ashore at promising landfalls and then toddling into the dunes to see what you can see. This was more or less our plan. From the settlement of Salt Creek in the south we intended to sail as far north as a week's worth of wind would take us. Now, with a shredded sail, north seemed less a direction to follow than a hopelessly romantic notion. Nevertheless, as we climbed towards the ocean beach 'a lack of progress' wasn't really an issue. On the high dune above camp, Peter and I glanced at each other and with barely a wink we both started down, walking in plunging strides that soon became mad, whiting gallops until finally we pulled up breathless at the bottom of an immerse, wind-blown basin.

The light off the sand was dazzling. We found ancient sea-worm castings, calcified with age and now exposed like a petrified forest of bonsai. On either side of this U-shaped bowl stood tall ridges, all razor-edged and comiced, a kind of silica model of the Alps Peter and I had fantsised about in our youth. The sound of the surf beckoned. We pushed through dripping scrub and spinifes and careered down the foredune to the ocean beach.

The tide was high and lines of breakersmaybe six or seven-thundered up and down
the coast. A haze of fine spray blew over
between the clouds, colouring the drifts of
cockle-shaped shells at our feet in glossy
mauves and pinks. It was one of those
evenings when the salty wind rips and test
like an energising force. We kept walking
until the spectre of another squall turned us
back, our escort a skittering pair of hooded
plovers whose piping calls added a suitable
note of urgency to the retreat.

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The weather gods were now in charge of travel arrangements and an ever strengthening south-westerly ordained another day in the dunes. In a way it was a relief to be resigned to our fate and after a feed I got to work patching the jib with a piece of yellow Ripstop scavenged from my tent's stuff sack. Peter looked sceptical and it was another occasion when I wished that my schooling had included less differential calculus and a lot more needlework

At least a few years of being a bush autodidact has given me some clues, like travelling with a sewing kit for a start. In fact. I'm convinced that one of the true dividends of a vagrant's life is learning to improvise. In a world busy with specialists and experts there should be room as well for impurists whose adventures are held together with chewing-gum and string. This can also mean mixing things up, such as bushwalking with a dinghy. Or like those misfits who have skis strapped to mountain bikes and the paddlers with climbing gear stowed in their sea kayaks.

Looking up from my handiwork, I saw Peter curled on the grass by the bubbling stove. He seemed very relaxed, tucked up in his parka. It was my chance to come clean:

You know how I pulled the bung from the back of the boat this morning and all that water came gushing out?"

'Yeah', he said, fixing me with a frown. 'Well, there's a bit of a hole in the bow,' 'How did that happen?'

It ran aground.

'Where?

To store the boat out of the way I had it hanging from the rafters in the shed. When I was packing to leave I began to lower it and the bow kind of dropped on to the

'So what you're saying is that the boat ran aground in your garage?

Yeah-I was in a hurry. I patched it up. It should be okay.' Peter rolled on to his back

and let out an almighty sigh.

Just keep sewing, boy', he said. The next morning the wind was raging. The sound I'd thought was drizzle on the tent-fly turned out to be the patter of windblown sand. White caps bristled on the lagoon and all around camp streams of grit were flying off the dune ridges. Peter was still sensibly ensconced in his bivvy-bag. I warmed my hands around a mug of tea and took up the sewing, eager to make amends for my busted boat and tatty sails. Being a dilettante doesn't always mean having to hide behind a mask of joky incompetence; occasionally, you can attempt to correct your stuff-ups-which, I guess, is one way a secular innocent can get a shot at redemption.

As I tailored on, it also occurred to me that blurring the boundaries between outdoors disciplines could be the way to go in a place like Australia. Rather than trying to uphold an European ideal of hiking, we have people taking to the Blue Mountains toting wet suits, abseil ropes and Lilos. Meanwhile quixotic characters traverse salt

lakes on cross-country skis and haul homemade carts through the desert, while others lob into far-flung corners of the Top End in a Cessna. This hybrid vigour can have prankish, larrikin streaks but it's also about getting to grips with the peculiarities of the continent. After all, the truth is out there.

By late morning the clouds had gone but the air remained fuzzy with sand whipped from the dunes. Powerless to beat the elements, we joined them instead and passed the day wandering the high ridges. On top the wind was outrageous-just staying up-

Ouentin Chester (see Contributors in Wild no 3) lives to walk a writes to live. His much preferred habitat is a deep Flinders Ranges gorge where he can be found resting on sandstone close to cool, dark waterholes

right entailed leaning at wildly comic angles. This buffeting and the swirling clouds of sand at ground level gave the scene a distinctly polar feel. We meandered from valley to valley, contemplating what the wind had revealed.

For all their apparent sameness, the Coorong dunes have a bountiful tale to tell. At every turn there are middens-huge mounds of bleached shells-where the forebears of the Ngarrindjeri people feasted on cockles dug from the sands of the ocean beach. On bare slopes scoured by the wind we found small bones and scatterings of sun-varnished stone chips with faces that had been worked to a keen edge, relics of an abundant, ingenious culture. In one hollow Peter came across a very different piece of rock. a mottled, palm-sized chunk of pink, black and opaque-white crystals. He passed it to me and I clenched it in my hand. It was a lump of granite, the kind that is exposed in the islands of Encounter Bay, 100 kilometres to the north-west.

As it happens I spent my childhood holidays at this bay, mucking about in boats. It was a place where I fished and snorkelled and tinkered with sails made from scraps of canvas-a place where I got a taste for the versatile life. In my teens I regularly made the crossing in my grandfather's dinghy to nearby Wright Island. During solitary days

clambering over this mighty humpback of granite, with its squabbling silver gulls, I had no idea about the deep and possibly dark history of these islands and the grand sweep of Coorong coastline beyond. I was told about the whalers and navigators such as Flinders, but not one word was said about the Ngarrindjeri

By our fourth morning the wind had eased. We hurriedly packed and rigged the boat, anxious to be on the move. As the breeze caressed the sails, the dinghy rose in the water and surged silently forward. So began two extraordinary days of sailing. We glided past kilometre upon kilometre of dunes, skirting low islands dotted with birds and dodging the Coorong's maze of reefs and sand bars. When not gossiping or pontificating. Peter and I passed the time watching crested terns diving for mullet and Vformations of pelicans cruising low over the

On the last day we crept along the Narrows, the skinny passage that separates the Coorong's southern and northern lagoons. Reclining on his rucksack, Peter wore an expression of quizzical disbelief as we zigzagged against the current. Two hours later his evebrows reached new heights as I coaxed the dinghy through the Needles, another treacherous dog-leg channel, this one flanked by a fearsome array of jagged rocks

'So what you're saying is that the boat ran aaround in your garage?'

Ahead, the northern lagoon opened to a broad expanse of water leading to the shanty settlement of Noonameena. Keep going far enough and you reach a point where the Coorong's worlds collide, where your vision of the place tends to blur into the murkier shadows of recent generations, for beyond lie the blighted Murray River. any number of ecological ills and the infamous site for the bridge to Hindmarsh Island

I can't pretend that I gave much thought to these matters as we tacked into a stiff breeze towards Noonameena. I had other things on my mind-keeping the boat upright and praying that the jib would hold. There were also dreams of Encounter Bay and a mysterious piece of granite. Most of all, I was replaying in my mind the words Peter uttered as we slipped through the eve of the Needles: 'A good bit of sailing that, boy.'

Guenfin Cher ber

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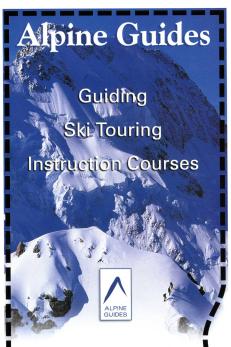
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The world of white-water kayaking

How you can get into it, by David Clark



From the sublime...Tamsin Peters kayaking on Aire River, the Otways, Victoria, at sunset. Naomi Peters

It is difficult to find in life any event which so effectually condenses intense nervous sensation into the shortest possible space of time as does the work of shooting, or running an immense rapid. There is no toil, no heart-breaking labour about it, but as much coolness, dexterity, and skill as man can throw into the work of hand, eye, and head; knowledge of when to strike and how to do it; knowledge of water and of rock, and of the one hundred combinations which rock and water can assume—for these two things, rock and water, taken in abstract, fail as completely to convey any idea of their fierce embracings in the throes of a rapid as the fire burning quietly in a drawing-room fireplace fails to convey the idea of a house wrapped and sheeted in flames.

Major William Francis Butler 1872, The Great Lone Land MAJOR BUTLER WAS PADDLING A GRADE-2 rapid in a birch-bark canoe in the USA with Ojibway Indians. Techniques and technology may have advanced considerably, but the thrill and excitement, the challenge, the satisfaction in tackling the forces of nature are still the same.

The adventure and wilderness experience of bushwalking, the fluidity and dynamism of skiing, the commitment of lead climbing—white-water kayaking has all this and even more.

The sport of white-water kayaking is a pleasant cruise down an isolated valley watching the landscape seemingly drift by; a multiday trip down challenging gorges with a laden kayak instead of a pack; or blasting down an urban stream in an evening after work.

It is pulling endless loops and cartwheels in a play hole, performing to the cameras;



or bouncing down a steep, tumbling creek choked with roots, trees and boulders. Whitewater kayaking varies tremendously in styles and difficulty—there is something to whet LShould that be wet? Editorl everyone's appetite.

Getting started

You can get started in kayaking in several ways:

attend a basic skills course with a reputable teaching organisation:

- join a canoe club, hire some gear from the club (or borrow it) and paddle on a beginners' trip;
- buy or hire some equipment and have a go with friends (but to learn good technique and safety skills the first two options are recommended).

For course and club details contact your State canoe association (see next page).

Equipment

Before you get on the water you'll need some basic equipment. Many canoe clubs hire this gear at very reasonable rates on the assumption that you will join the club later.

Cavak

Today's white-water kayaks are usually made from plastic, which is strong and durable. Fibreglass/composite boats, while much lighter, are easily damaged on rocks. The days of patching repairs on a Friday night and plugging leaks with duct tape are long gone for most of us.

Long boats (say, three metres plus) are typically faster in a straight line (ideal for long trips) but are not as manoeuvrable as shorter kayaks. Wider boats are more stable but slower. High-volume boats are great for storing gear but not as much fun to play in

as lower volume boats. Kayaks with rounded edges are more forgiving in white water than those with sharp edges (rails) but do not carve turns as well.

Check that you can easily get into fand out of a kayak and that it is comfortable. Manufacturers usually state a recommended paddler weight range for each model. Consider safety features such as keyhole cockpisi (easy to get out of when capsized) and bulkhead footrests (your feet can't get stuck behind these).

Air bags fitted inside a kayak give it extra buoyancy when swamped and are well worth the cost (particularly if you're going to swim

Seek the advice of other paddlers, and try out a few kayaks before making a purchase (see Wild no 68 for a survey of white-water touring kayaks). If buying second-hand beware of deep gouges and repairs in the hull

(in my experience plastic repairs never last very long).

Paddle

A paddle comprises a shaft (metal, wood or composite) and two blades (plastic, wood or composite). A metal shaft with plastic blades is an adequate paddle with which to begin (I'm still using these).

Holmo

Rocks are harder than bone! Always wear a good canoeing helmet to protect the top and back of your head, and your temples. It must be comfortable and have good drain-age. Thermal hats can be worn underneath on cold days—and peaked caps on sunny days.

Personal flotation device (PFD)

PEDs should always be worn on the river. As well as giving some floation they provide padding, protection and some thermal insulation to the torso. Ensure a snug and comfortable fit with a tight vasishand: when swimming it shouldn't lift up over your head. Optional features include rescue harness systems and pockets for food, car keys and throw ropes.

Spray-deck

A spray-deck is a neoprene (or nylon) skirt which prevents water from entering through the cockpit. It should have a tight fit around the cockpit rim but make sure that it will come off easily when the release strap is pulled.

Clothing

The choice of appropriate clothing depends on factors such as the weather, the water temperature, and whether you are likely to swim. As a rule kayakers are constantly wet or damp, and may be regularly immersed in

Canoeing associations

To find out about canoeing/ kayaking courses and canoe clubs in your area, contact your regional canoeing association.

- Australian Canoeing
 Phone (02) 9552 4500
- New South Wales Canoeing Phone (02) 9660 4597
- Canoe Northern Territory
 Phone (08) 8999 8773
- Queensland Canoeing Phone (07) 3278 1033
- Canoe South Australia Phone (08) 8341 5405
- Canoe Tasmania
 Phone (03) 6356 1612
- Canoeing Victoria
 Phone (03) 9459 4277
- Amateur Canoe Association of Western Australia Phone (08) 9387 5756



...to the ridiculous. Julien Atherstone lugging 50 kilograms of gear harnessstyle en route to the upper Gordon River. The kayak has a mind of its own. (Vale of Rasselas, South-west Tasmania.) lain Groves

cold water. The choice of clothing can therefore be critical to both your enjoyment and your safety.

On cold days, or when canceing in cold water, maintaining the body's core temperature is important. On hot days, with warm water, avoiding sunburn and sunstroke are key considerations.

Outer lawer.

A waterproof canoeing jacket (cag) with the neck and cuffs made from neoprene or latex can be worn. It should not restrict armand upper-body movement. A cag may not be required on warm days, or when canoeing in warm water. Inner layer

On cold days, or when canoeing in cold water, use clothing that stays warm when it is wet. Wool, polypropylene thermals and wet suits can be worn under the cag. Wetsuit long johns with a thermal top are a popular choice, particularly if you're likely to swim a lot swim.

Cotton is suitable only for warm days, or when canoeing in warm water where keeping covered and cool are the main concerns.

Footwear

Neoprene booties with a patterned rubber sole are commonly worn in cold weather Sport sandals can be worn on the bank and stored in the kayak when paddling. Whatever your footwear in the boat, make sure that you can easily get out of the boat while wearing it.

Safety gear

The following is a suggested list of equipment a group should carry on a typical canoeing trip:

- whistle (each paddler)
- first aid kit
- food and drink
- matches spare warm clothing
- map and compass
- rope knife split paddle (spare paddle that breaks
- into pieces)
- gaffer tape and repair kit
- torch
- plastic bivvy-bag
- sunscreen
- throw rope(s)
- Items to be kept dry can be stored inside the kayak in dry bags (refer to Wild no 63 for a survey).

Typical equipment costs

	New (\$)	Used (\$)
Plastic kavak	800 - 1300	400 - 700
Paddle	80 - 300	20 - 100
Helmet	60 - 100	20 - 50
Buoyancy vest	70 - 250	30 - 100
Spray-deck	40 - 150	20 - 50
Total	1050 - 2100	490-1000

It costs \$20-50 to hire all this equipment for a day.

Grading

The International River Grading System is used in Australia. It is briefly summarised as:

- Easy (beginner)
- Moderate (novice)
- 3 Fairly difficult (intermediate)
- 4 Difficult (advanced) 5 Very difficult (expert)
- 6 Extremely difficult (extreme)

Generally, the harder the grade, the more dangerous the river. However, a grade-1 river can still flow quite quickly, and you should be aware of the potential hazards including powerful currents, cold water and

overhanging/fallen trees (see below). The grades stated in guidebooks can vary significantly with different river levels and also over time due to floods and so on. Always inspect rapids of which you are unsure before running them. Portage (walk round) if necessary.

Hazards

White-water kayaking, like most adventure sports, has some hazards. These can usually be avoided provided you know that they

are there. Paddling with experienced paddlers is a better way to learn about the hazards than the trial-and-error method!

Flood-the water is fast and powerful and flows over the banks and round trees. Rescues and getting off the water can be difficult. River grades and descriptions do not cover flood conditions.

Cold-drains strength and reduces coordination (often resulting in more swims). Immersion in cold water can quickly lead to hypothermia

Holes/stoppers-reverse currents formed by water flowing over a submerged object (boulder, ledge) which can hold a buoyant object. Holes can be great fun to play in, but some can hold boats (and bodies) for long periods.

Weirs-some are extremely dangerous due to strong, enclosed stoppers. Treat all weirs with caution

Log-iams/strainers-often formed by fallen trees or boulder chokes, a strainer (or sieve) is an obstacle that allows water to flow through but not a boat or a person. Anything trapped against a log-jam/strainer can be subject to significant water pres-

Safety tips

- Paddling alone is not recommended. Three or more paddlers are preferable.
- Always wear a personal flotation device and a helmet.
- Be able to swim at least 50 metres in canoeing clothes and a PFD.
- Plan your trip and check weather and river conditions
- Know the difficulty of the proposed trip and be honest about your canoeing ability.
- Don't attempt trips much beyond your ability and experience.
- Carry appropriate safety gear.
- Always leave details of your trip with a responsible person.
- Value the development of canoeing skills. Practise capsize drills and rescue techniques and learn first aid.

Pinning-a kayak trapped horizontally or vertically on boulders, trees and so on by the force of water. Can sometimes cause boats to bend, trapping the paddler.

White-water rivers

Most of Australia's white-water rivers run off the Great Dividing Range or are in Tasmania, though there are a few near

While some rivers have enough flow to paddle all year round, most rely on heavy rain and/or snow melt to provide suitable

levels. In southern regions this is usually in winter and spring, while further north the summer (wet) season has most water. Some rivers are dammed and can be paddled at various times of the year during water

The list below is a selection of rivers which have grade-2 sections suitable for paddlers to develop their white-water skills and experience. Refer to guidebooks for detailed descriptions including start and finish points, grades, river levels, and typical hazards (weirs, portages and so on).

State	River
NSW	Murrumbidgee River
	Barrington River
	Nymboida River
Qld	Mary River
	Barron River*
	Tully River*
Tas	River Derwent*
	River Forth*
	South Esk River
Vic	Yarra River
	Loddon River*
	Macalister River
WA	Avon River
	Murray River
	Deep River
SA	No white water

* dam released

Guidebooks

- Hastings, Mike 1992, White Water Tasmania, Informationat-a-glance.
- McLaughlin, Chris & Yvonne 1988. Canoeina the Rivers and Lakes of Queensland and the Northern Territory, Macstyle.
- McLaughlin, Chris & Yvonne 1998 The Rivers and Lakes of New South Wales, third edition, Macstyle.
- McLaughlin, Chris & Yvonne 1999. The Rivers and Lakes of Victoria third edition Riverside Publications.
- NSW Canoe Association 1990. Canoeing Guide to New South Wales
- Victorian Canoe Association 1988, Canoeing Guide to Victoria, sixth edition.

Final word

The next issue of Wild will cover basic flatand white-water kayaking techniques to get you moving in the right direction.

David Clark became hooked on canoeing at the age of twelve. After 18 years of getting cold and wet in various countries he is still as keen as ever. In between engineering, changing nappies, home renovations, gardening and a little freelance writing he occasionally finds the time to paddle some white water. He lives in Melbourne.



Heather Morrison comes face to face with a bushfire on Victoria's McMillans Track



When Angus McMillan cut the track in 1864 he marked it with large triangular blazes cut into the snow gums—some of which are still visible. It is doubtful that the distinct red triangles used to mark McMillans Track today will still be around in 100 years. All uncredited photos Heather Morrison

It asset to NAME A LONC-DISTANCE walking track in Victoria's High Country, mort people would think of the Australian Alps Walking Track. Yet nearby lies Mullians Track—an extended, historical walking track that traverses some of the most varied and spectracular alignies excerpt found in the Alpine National Park. Cut by explorer Angus Movillain in 1864, the track truns for 200 kilometres from the Victoria River Track near Omeo to Woods Point.

Brought out of semi-retirement by the Victorian Government, McMillan was given the task of blazing a trail to link up the goldfields of Omeo, Dargo, Crooked River, Harrietville, Woods Point and Jordan. With a party of 14 men and three months before the winter, McMillan—a veteran of cutting tracks in the Alps-successfully completed the eight-foot track, marking the way with blazed emblems on many of the trees.

The gold-rushes of the 1800s came and went and so, too, did many of the tracks of those days. McMillans Track was no exception. With many parts overgrown or having been upgraded to form part of the road





network, the track almost became lost to time. It was the Ben Cruachan Walking Club, based at Maffra, that recognised the significance of the track's history. In 1983 the club began a five-year project to relocate, map and mark the original route taken by McMillan's party. McMillans Track was re-established.

The summer of 1997–98 etched the name McMillan forever into my memory. It was some 13 6 years after the track was first cut. With ten others from the Dandenon Valley Bushwalking Club, I planned to spend ten days walking part of McMillans Track from the Victoria River to Breaslfast Creek. It was a significant walk from an historical perspective but it was also significant on a personal level. I had never walked for more than four days continuously carrying a full pack. It was to be a challenge.

One of the issues in planning an extended walk like this is that you start at one end and finish at the other, with a considerDividing Range. The first surprise of the trip was to discover a tranquil alpine lake teeming with bird life. With glassy reflections and a multitude of ducks among the lush reed beds, it was worth taking time out for exploration. One of the luxuries of an extended walk is that you can be flexible.

As we walked along the Dinner Plain Track to the start of our first challenge, the steep descent to Mayford, we were reminded of Angus McMillan. Four very large triangular blazes stood out on some very old snow gums. No doubt having survived fire, blizzards and all manner of attack, the trees and their marks stand testament to our pioneering past. They are lasting symbols of the tenacity and daring of explorers like McMillan who forged paths into the wilderness-and into our future. Looking at one of today's trail 'blazes'-a bright red metal triangle nailed to a tree-I seriously doubted its ability to continue to mark the way 136 years from now.

After a tricky descent on the very steep and rutted four-wheel-drive track on to the tag grassy plain of Mayford, we reached the tag pags plain of Mayford, we reached the tot or isk having a fire. As the evening progressed it became apparent that this decision was not shared by our neighbours, a group with four-wheel drives Bemused, we watched them drive over, lasso a log and drag it back to their camp. That right the sun set in the Mayford valley to the sound of a buzzing chairs saw.

of a buzzing chain-saw. The next day we traversed the Dargo High Plains after a steep ascent of the Tressure Spur. Alpine wild flowers were in bloom everywhere and the views across to Mist Hotham and Feathertop were spectacular. An endless expanse of mountains covered in trees is a view of which I could never tire. Now for the real challenge. We met the other three members of our party withmoan, groam—all that food we would now have to carry.

nave to carry.

From the high plains our route along the
White Timber Spur became 'down' without
wasageration. The real test for our legs—and
all that weight—was about to begin. The
track seemed to end abruptly at a spur before dropping to the junction of 25 and 30
Mile Creeks below. No fear of four-wheel
drives and chain-saws tonight. We were completely alone and as it was becoming uncomfortably hot we enjoyed bathing in the
clear cool and oneactful waters of the creeks.

The next day was to take us along 30 Mile Creek, joining the Crooked River. We

'A yellow glow filled the sky around the huge clouds of billowing steam.'

able distance in between. Therefore organising to get to the start and back from the finish can cause a few minor headaches with complicated, time-consuming car shuttles. We solved this problem by Inring a bus and driver to drop us off on the first day and pick us up on the last. It proved to be an worthwhile and economic venture, and more convenient than we could have foreseen.

My greatest concern was carrying the amount of food required for ten days. Being of small stature, the thought of lugging so much weight on my back was frightening. I felt relieved when it turned out that three members of the party couldn't join the walk until day three. It was therefore arranged that they would bring the last seven days' food with them, thus lessening the weight the rest of us would have to carry at the start.

With everything organised, we made our way to Omeo and the Victoria River. The first thing we noticed was how dry the area looked. Cippsland was suffering one of its worst droughts in years, apparently the effects of El Niño. Thoughts of dry riverbeds caused some concerns, but in this case they were unfounded During the ten days we had to cross seven major rivers; all of them still had significant, albeit lowered, water-levels. It turned out that heat, not water, was to be our major concern.

After a comfortable night beside the Victoria River, sleeping to the sounds of lowing cattle, we made our way up on to the Great

Bushfire SAFETY What to do, by Monica Chapman

Bushwalkers can take a number of precautions to minimise the chance of being caught in a wildfire and can adopt numerous survival strategies if caught out.

Plan to avoid bushfires

Avoid fire-prone areas during times of high fee danger. Australia is divided into fire-ban districts—butwalkers, particularly group leaders, should find out whether a fire ban is in force in the area of their walk. If a ban exists, consider cancelling the walk or selecting an alternative one. On days of life in Sik—when temperatures are high, humber of the control of the control

What to do if in the bush

Remember that fires burn more rapidly up hills than down and cannot be outrun. Consider the terrain, the wind direction and its possible changes, the thickness of undergrowth and trees, the amount of protection available in the area, the location of your vehicles and the chance of encountering others who can assist.

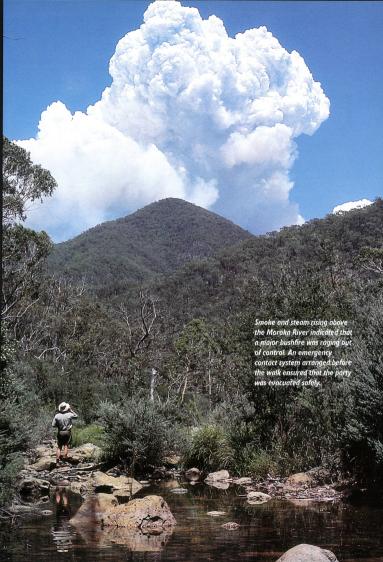
Seek a suitable refuge from the radiant heat generated by the fire. Radiant heat travels in straight lines, therefore it is very important to find a solid barrier to use as a shelter. Take cover behind large rocks or logs; in holes made by fallen trees; in eroded gullies, dugouts, deep wheel ruts, culverts; or behind road bridges. Running streams and pools also provide cover.

Make the most of your shelter by cleaning away any scub and leaf litter. Use clothing, preferably woollen, to protect all exposed skin. Use bark, branches, soft earth and rocks to build additional barriers around your shelter. Keep low to breath the cooler air close to the ground and to avoid inhaling smoke. Breathe slowly and stay calm. Ideally, try to shelter in pairs and keep an eye on other members of the group.

Attracting attention of aircraft

It is very difficult to be seen from the air in timbered terrain. You'll need to find a clearing or an open space along a rivebub. Use three signals regularly spaced. Signal by waving brightly coloured clothing, or by flashing a mirror or torch.

Monica Chapman really enjoys the contrast of bushwalking and ski-touring adventures to city life. She appreciates the beauty and harshness of our more remote wild areas and particularly enjoys visiting the rugged coastlines and sculptured ridges of South-west Tasmania.



studied the map. The river is aptly named. With more bends than a hair crimper, it winds its way along steep-sieded valleys to Bull Town, the site of an old gold-mining settlement. We expected that the day's walking would be relatively easy as we would be meandering along the river-bank. How wrong we were!

We hadn't anticipated the eagerness of old Angus to cut his rack up and over nearly every spur coming down to those bends. My legs would never forgive me! However, the spectacular views along the Crooked River valley from the spurs were consolation. The early morning light made the leaves glow bright green; a backdrop of clear, blue mountains unfolded in the distance. The heat intensified as the day wore on and, with the need to carry extra water, it was a very hot and tired group that arrived in Bull frown that evening.

The next stretch of the Crooked River took us through another of the gold-mining settlements, Talbotville. Many old relics of the gold-ush days are lying rusted among the scrub to explore on side-trips. They make sense of the track's existence. We were really following in the footsteps of McMillan and all those who had braved the bush to seek their fortunes in gold.

The track took us out of the valley and down to the Wongungara River By this time the afternoon heat was so intense that we decided to spend the rest of the day sitting in the river under the shade of a stand of majestic manna-gums. We'd tackle the climb up and over the Cynthia Range into the Wonnangatta valley in the cool of early morning.

The next day we walked past the dry and dusty paddocks of 'Eaglevale' Station. There wasn't a soul about and there was an air of nervous tension. The surrounding bush was so dry that it seemed as though it might

burst into flame at any moment. The heat was oppressive.

The track wound its way through some hills skirting the river freehold properties. We were glad to reach our camp-site on the Wonnangatta River-and to have access to water again. The area seemed strangely quiet and deserted. As sunset approached we relaxed in the river to the glow of a

spectacular, pink sky. Someone suggested that it could be smoke from a fire, and a serious debate ensued. If there was a bushfire somewhere in the area, should we continue on or turn back? A number of related questions were raised.

Our goal was to complete the walk and it could be premature to give up without first obtaining facts. To continue without knowing where a fire was might mean that we could walk right into it. Turning back, however, could entail the same risk. If we did turn back, where would we go instead? 'Eaglevale' might have a phone, but it had seemed locked up and deserted. To head up a track to a major road could expose us to fire without protection and we might not find anyone there. As long as we were on the river near some deep water, we could seek protection from flames.

Most of us believed that we were here to bushwalk, and bushwalking entails responsibility to decide what challenges—and possible risks—the individual is willing to undertake in its pursuit. However, we were walking as a group and to split up and go separate ways would be far riskier. We had left our walk details with relatives. If we stayed together on our planned route the people at home would know exactly where we were. The issue were getting more and more complicated, and personal feelings of strength or fear were beginning to emerge. Ultimately, the decision was left to the walk leader. We would continue as planned.





From here, McMillans Track enters wilderness following the Moroka River. A sign cautions walkers that they are entering a remote area and should be self-sufficient. As I read it I felt an ominous sense of force boding—as if we were going beyond the point of no return. There was an air of nervous tension. Tall, white stands of mannagums extend along the Moroka's banks. and we realised just how difficult it is to spot someone in scrub from a helicopter. We continued on our planned route heading for Higgins Yard, our intended campsite for that night.

With the fierce howling of the wind and the extreme heat, I began to feel fearful, not wanting to leave the water. At first we walked close to the water's edge away from

the track. But the going proved very difficult and extremely hot. It was easier, faster and cooler to stick to the track even though it climbed up over the spurs. The wind continued to how and we burn out about 35,000 hectares of pristine alpine bush. The shame and firstation is that careless campers, leaving a fire unattended, started it. We were glad of our decision not to have fires during the walk. To have hired a bus and driver also proved worth while. During the evacuation our party was dropped off at three separate locations due to dwindling daylight and the need to refuel the helicopter. Our bus driver was notified and picked us up at the separate spots.

Although our planned walk along Mc-Millans Track had been abruptly cut short, we had still covered more than 100 kilo-



Taking a break at one of the many track junctions along McMillans Track. The track traverses well-signed four-wheel-drive tracks and remote wilderness areas during its 200 kilometres.

The water-level was low, but the odd, deep waterhole was here and there. With a fierce, hot northerly wind blowing, they were a tempting prospect.

This, day eight of our ten-day walk, was faced to be our last. As we followed the Moroka we became aware of a huge cloud of smoke and steam rising up in the air. It was now obvious that a major bushfire was raging out of control. We appeared to be on the easten side of the front and as long as the wind continued as a northerly, we might be all right. We fervently hoped that it wouldn't change. About midday we spoted a police helicopter flying near the river. We waved our arms wildly at it, but the occupants couldn't see us among the scrub

Heather Morrison
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solidly spectral regard,
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in remote assurant
in the process learn
the first a shoul
the both

could hear distant crackling. The fire wasn't far away. A yellow glow filled the sky around the huge clouds of billowing steam. We were all feeling exhausted. No sooner had we reached Higgins Yard than a police helicopter appeared. I felt a great burst of relief. We were saved! The officers had a detailed map showing our exact route and where we would be that night. Our contact system had worked. It took three trips to evacuate us to safety.

From the air we could see the devastation already caused by the fire. One of the worst fires since Ash Wednesday, the Alpine National Park wildfire was destined to The Moroka River below Snowy Bluff. The original McMillans Track crossed this river many times. The walkers pictured are crossing the river on the western side of Snowy Bluff close to one of McMillan's original crossings. The re-established McMillans Track crosses the river only once between where it meets the river west of Snowy Bluff and Moroka Glen. John Chapman

metres. We had traversed plains covered in wild flowers, gazed upon endless alpine views, followed meandering and remote river valleys and bathed in clear, cool waters, that had been challenging with the weight, steep terrain and threat of bushfire—and the extreme heat had made it very difficult—but it was a bushwalk to be remembered. I felt hankful to the diligent Scotsman who had come out of retirement to make it all possible.

The best maps to use for this walk are the following 1:50 000 Vicmap sheets: Grooked River-Steve, Dargo Plains-Cobungra, Tamboritha-Moroka, and Howitt-Sekryn.

Where the **Miles** Things Are

Steven Nowakowski encounters creatures great and small on the Boonoo Boonoo River, northern New South Wales. Photos by Jeff Wright

SOFT SOUNDS OF WATER DROPLETS HAD woken me to the dull light filtering in through my tent. As I peered out of the tent door and looked up to the heavens, Jeff remarked, It's always like this when I come here'. We had just woken in Boonoo Boonoo camping ground (pronounced 'Bunna Boonoo') just south of the Queensland border and in the Granite Belt region.

We had deliberated for weeks on where we could possibly do a wilderness walk during the Easter long weekend. Most walking and camping areas would have many visitors; we wanted to go bush and be secluded during the busiest time of the year. We wanted to go where there were numer-



How many wilderness walks boast bush tucker this juicy? The author, left, Kylie Gilbert and Tony Hathoway lugging their loot to the next camp-site, only to find that their wild melons weren't ripe.

Info

Medium

Location

Boonoo Boonoo National Park is 275 kilometres (three-and-a-half hours' drive) south-west of Brisbane, and 22 kilometres north of Tenterfield, New South Wales

Grade Length

An easy three to four days River walk, forest, open

Type bushland Region

Granite Relt northern NSW Best time Year-round; uncomfortable when flooded

Special points

Boulders slippery when wet; stay on the west bank when navigating round Rocky Island; car shuttle required

ous photographic inspirations, swimming opportunities and unique walking. Boonoo Boonoo River was the obvious choice because of its proximity to Brisbane.

Our bushwalk would take us from Undercliffe Falls to Boonoo Boonoo Falls camping ground, where we had camped on the first night. This camping ground is at the top of the falls within the Boonoo Boonoo National Park. A visitor can gain a better understanding and perspective of the river and the falls from a nearby viewing platform. The platform gives a breathtaking view of the falls as they roar into the gorge 210 metres below. A gully of rainforest absorbs the moisture at the base of the falls. The topography of the land unfolds as the viewer follows the winding river downstream until it passes from sight. We were to begin

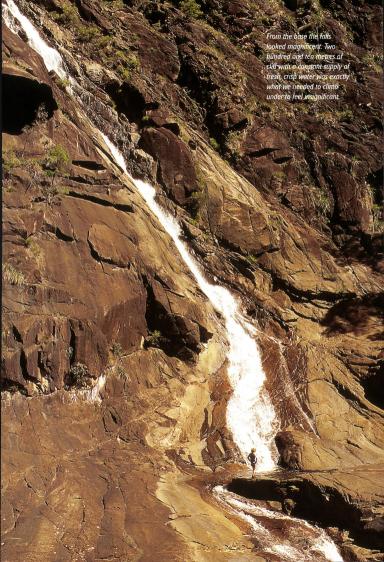
our walk in this region following the river upstream to this viewing platform.

After referring to track notes such as Wild's Wild Waterfalls guidebook, and the Bushpeople's Guide to Bushwalking in South-East Queensland (1991, second edition, Bushpeople Publications), we knew that this particular walk wasn't going to be strenuous. The walk was said to be 'an idyllic delight with every bend of the river providing a new surprise-rapids, pools, slabs or white sandy stretches. Campsites abound...' A very easy three- or four-day lazy through-walk can be undertaken. This was my type of throughwalk; I particularly liked the words 'easy' and 'lazy'

After the 50 kilometre car shuttle from Boonoo Boonoo Falls to Undercliffe Falls we were on our way to spending four relaxing days bushwalking up the Boonoo Boonoo River. Our group of four began by crossing the gully to the south-east of the open paddocks at Undercliffe Falls, thus enabling us to pick up the unused fourwheel-drive track on top of the next ridge. Dense mist enshrouded us as we followed the winding track along the ridgetop. We frequently encountered kangaroos grazing on the luscious grasses and on one occasion we were followed by an inquisitive and tame horse. The mist was still thick and it drizzled occasionally, giving us a sense of solitude. The last kilometre of the track

drops steeply; an old stockman's hut nestled among the bush and adjacent to the river came into view. After scaring a carpet python from the hut we decided to have lunch. Everything inside the hut was still in order and it felt as though the former occupant had just moved out. A first aid kit and food tins were still intact. From the hut we wandered about two kilometres upstream to a picturesque camp-site beside the river. The site was ideally positioned on the river-bank, which had recently been grazed by cattle leaving a soft pad of freshly chewed grass upon which to rest our

The lower reaches of the river mostly border private lands although there have not been any problems of bushwalkers being refused access. The upper section near the Boonoo Boonoo Falls is mainly in National Park and State Forest, so gaining permits beforehand through the National Parks & Wildlife Service at Glen Innes is strongly recommended. On the private land, where cattle roam freely, it is still disheartening to see bank erosion in some places from their hard hoofs. Australia's landscape has not evolved to cater for such huge beasts-our native vegetation and freshwater creeks can't deal with these introduced mammals. Given that cattle were in the area, we made a point of boiling our drinking-water.



We woke to more drizzling rain on Saturday; this seemed to give the river an eerier ambience. It also created good light for photography. Shutters were clicking everywhere as we tried to capture the ambience and solitude on film.

We resumed walking upstream for two hours until we came to the junction with Bookookoorara Creek, called Wallaroo Junction. Here we dropped our heavy loads and took an exploratory walk up the creek, keeping in mind possible routes and alternatives for future walks. The creek is fast flowing, quite clear and was obviously suitable for frogs. Darting for cover, they were

In some river sections it is far easier to travel along the banks on the formed cattle pads. Cattle pads are a relief after spending hours negotiating slippery grantie boulders which sometimes line the river. The river in some parts forms quite large pools with sandy beaches; the pools are suitable for safe swimming, away from rapids and boulders. In other sections the river narrows to form either a meandering creek lined with soil banks and reeds or a narrow gorge with steep cliff-faces. After finding a camp-site another swim was in order. We all concluded that Tony doesn't feel pain in his backside. At every opportunity he would

slide down slippery rapids on his bum. It was hilarious when he lost control and slid straight into another boulder. We sat up that night waiting for the partial lunar eclipse while being entertained by the wallabies jumping around our tents.

The next morning we were greeted with Easter eggs at the doors of our tents. Today was Easter Sunday and there was nowhere else I'd rather have been After a short walk

'After scaring a carpet python from the hut we decided to have lunch.'

downstream to spot a platypus in a large rock pool, I realised that I was in a special place near a beautiful tire ful of all managements and the place of the pl

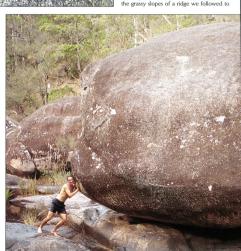
We were expecting to see a dirt road crossing any moment as we strolled down the grassy slopes of a ridge we followed to



Beautifully carved granite within the catchment of Boonoo Boonoo River. Rock pools, gorges, sand bars and billabongs, all teeming with wildlife, make this ideal country for a lazier style of bushwalkina.

plentiful along this section of creek. One particular frog just wouldn't sit still for the camera and the four of us looked as though we were playing Twister as we tried to contain the hyperactive creature. Following the creek upstream was rewarding as each bend of the creek brought about a new sense of discovery. The creek is pretty and features some large cypress pines on its banks. On returning to the junction we were revitalised with a brisk swim in the cool water. Bookookoorara Creek is a lovely tributary and worthy of future exploration.

A beautiful specimen of water dragon lay perchad on a rock undisturbed by our presence and just waiting to be photographed—or so it seemed. After a tenminute ritual of setting up camera gear, a creeping around the dragon to find the best perspective, crouching down and focusing, of the dragon took of filke a jackin-inthe-box. Fortunately, there were many more occasions to photograph wildlife. We spotted numerous bird species, usually robins exhibtime plumages of bright red and vellow.



make a short cut. This cut a considerable one-and-a-half kilometres off our journey and it gave us a chance to observe different types of scenery and vegetation. Upon reaching the road crossing where other campers were enjoying the solitude of the river we hastily dropped our packs and ran for the many rock pools. Fantastic granite formations make splendid displays of waterfalls and cascades, and fearless Tony couldn't wait to try out his developed sliding technique. The area looked like a water park as we scrambled up and over boulders and slabs to find the best slide or swim-

ming spot. Further upstream is a reach of the river called Rocky Island. We made sure that we stayed on a cattle pad on the right side of the river; if we rock hopped in the river we would have come to numerous dead ends of waterholes, billabongs and sand bars among the scrub. As we rounded another bend in the river we beamed at a beautifully large rock pool surrounded by cliffs on one side and by vegetation on the opposite side. On the northern side is a brilliant, sandy beach that was perfect for a lunch spot and a swim. As luck would have it just as we were ready to enter the water the sun broke through the overcast sky and warmed our sweatv bodies. While basking in the sun the atmosphere was one you would expect when visiting the beach but something was missing-the crowds.

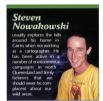
Later on we came across some wild watermelons that were growing on the riverbank. Kylie had a great idea: Lets carry them. to camp.' So off we went juggling watermelons between us. After carrying them for the rest of the day dishelief overcame us when we discovered that the melons weren't ripe. Kylie wasn't popular that evening.

Riverside vegetation along most of the river consists of banksia, she-oak, paperbark, grevillea, bottle-brush and tea-tree, Along the river are bare, smooth stretches of granite dotted with tea-tree; large pools with sandy hanks lined with cypress pinemassive houlder-strewn stretches: and secluded, rocky pools.

The following day provided more water entertainment: however, we were keen to reach Boonoo Boonoo Falls. The falls were our incentive, being the power and force that drives the mighty river through a maze of hillsides. From the base the falls looked magnificent: spectrums of colour forming a rainbow appeared to greet us on our arrival. The enormousness of the site was staggering. Two hundred and ten metres of cliff with a

constant supply of fresh, crisp water was exactly what we needed to climb under to feel insignificant.

The waterfall acted as a masseur removing all our thoughts and mesmerising us into a relaxed state of trance. We lay scattered around the base on huge slabs, absorbing the sun, thunderous sounds and cool, wet spray bouncing off the rocks. It was hard to round everyone up and tell them that we had a hard clamber ahead of us to get to the top and back to the cars.



The track leading to the top is 50 metres upstream and to the east of the falls (on your left as you are looking at them). It follows a ridge and halfway up the ascent it links on to the tourist track which winds its way up to the observation platform. Upon reaching the platform we began to meet sightseers again. People dressed in clean clothes, with clean bodies. There were the elderly. Asian tourists. locals and children all peering down at the splendid falls and gazing at the never-ending valley snaking its way to the horizon. I felt sorry for them. as they were unable to feel the true character of the river. It seemed that all they were witnessing was the facade of something which was hiding its true identity deep down in the valleys below. To get down in the river and feel it, smell it, hear it and taste it would enable them to com-

prehend more fully what makes the place so special. Living with the river and its animals for four days we had just a glimpse at one component of our vast and varied land mass.

1:25 000 Central Mapping Authority sheets.



this one! While sloping granite slabs

strewn with large boulders such as this.

surround the river above Boonoo

Boonoo Falls, the lower section is

The best maps to use are the Liston and Bookookoorara

Fearless

Few Australians have clocked up as much time above 5000 metres as Sue Fear.

Quentin Chester investigates

RADIO INTERVIEWERS ALWAYS WANT TO discuss four things with Sue Fear the perennial why of climbing. ME Everest, the woman thing, and her surrame. As monikers go, hers might seem especially apt for someone who habitually engages in that most perious of pastimes: Himaloyan mountaineering. Yet, talking with the individual behind the name it soon becomes evident that trepidation is not a critical element in her make-up. Of the factors contributing to Fear's success and motivation as a mountaineer, adrenalin addiction is well down the list.

The name might appear memorable, yet when she became the first Australian woman to reach the summit of Nepal's Cho. Oyu (8201 metres) on 24 September last year, few people-even within the broader climbing fraternity—would have heard of Sue Froat. She had bagged one of the worlds prized 8000 metre peaks, not only that, it was a stylish, lightweight ascent, without supplementary oxygen or support from Sherpis and porters. In a postmonsoon period marked by exceptionally heavy snow-



In September 1998 Sue Fear became the first Australian woman to reach the summit of Nepal's Cho Oyu (8201 metres). It was a stylish, lightweight ascent, without supplementary oxygen or support from Sherpas and porters. All photos Sue Fear collection

Fear, smeared in sunscreen, in the Cordillera Real, Bolivia, in 1992. She has led more than 30 highaltitude treks or climbs in the Himalayas, Karakoram and Andes and hopes to still be 'pottering along the trail' when she's sixty or seventy,



falls, she and climbing partner Nima Dorje Tamang made a relatively brisk push from Camp 3 to the summit in seven-and-a-half

There is a strong chance that Australians will hear a lot more about Fear's exploits. Following the Cho Oyu success, she plans to tackle another Himalavan giant, Shisha Pangma (8046 metres)-without a climbing partner or any Sherpas or porters-during the coming postmonsoon season. Mt Everest is firmly in her sights for next year. After that, let's see now, she's always liked the look of K2 and then there's Makalu and Kangcheniunga and...

working in travel reservations for Australian Himalayan Expeditions (now World Expeditions). Even back then, as she was taking her first steps in the outdoors, it was clear that this was somebody with determination

When I caught up with her at one of her recent slide shows it had been ten years or so since our paths last crossed. Outwardly, little seemed to have changed: the same measured, slightly husky voice and piercing, blue eyes. There was, however, evidence of new-found confidence and humour. Gone was the somewhat solemn persona I remembered from earlier days. Breezing

In these early years, however, there were occasional windows on a very different world. At school Fear was encouraged into the outdoors through the Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme. Then, in her fifth year of secondary school, Nawang Gombu, a stocky Sherpa who had made the summit of Mt Everest twice, visited Barker College. I saw his slides of the Himalaya', she recalls, 'and I just couldn't believe that there were things like that happening at the same time as we were stuck in Hornsby on the other side of the planet

After leaving school Fear was still committed to competitive sports. For a brief



Fear's first big overseas trip was to Kilimaniaro (5895 metres). Tanzania, in 1987. No one else on the expedition was interested in making a summit bid and the local guides advised Fear against a solo attempt. In the end she made the cook go with her, hence his frown.

So what's a nice girl from Sydney's upper North Shore doing launching herself into high-altitude alpinism? Well, the first thing to note is that Fear's involvement with mountains is no sudden fancy: on the contrary. Over the past 15 years she's developed an extraordinary appetite for travel and adventure, so much so that seven or eight months a year are spent in and around high summits. The passion for climbing has emerged from a hard-won understanding of both herself and the complex, rarefied world of peaks and passes. Indeed, very few Australians have clocked up as much time above 5000 metres as Fear has in recent years.

Another observation to make is that Fear has an unusually high level of resolve. Slightly built, with a shock of dark hair, she might seem at first glance an unlikely candidate for what many outsiders see as the hairy-chested world of mountaineering. When I first met her in the early 1980s she was

through three carousels of slides, she talked with jaunty authority to a small huddle of prospective clients about the demands of being 'on the hill'. At the same time, the references to her Nepalese friends and the wonders of wild environs left a vivid impression that there was much more to the trips she was promoting-and the life she enjoys-than a blaze of summit glory.

Talking with her later, I was curious about her decade of change. As with Fear's diversion into climbing, the well-springs of this maturity and expansiveness are located in her travelling encounters. From a childhood in St Ives in Sydney there were few signs that she would embrace journey-making so avidly. During her student days at Abbotsleigh Girls School and Barker College, both on the North Shore. Fear was bound up with mainstream sports like hockey, swimming and cricket. 'Growing up on the North Shore, you don't really interact that much; you are very protected, she says.

period she even contemplated becoming a physical education teacher. But the frustrations of trying to carve out a professional sporting career soon surfaced: I just figured if you haven't got the superelite ability, you're wasting your time.' She turned to the travel industry as an alternative path. In 1982, not long after qualifying as an agent, she was invited, partly by accident, to join a familiarisation trek to Kashmir, north-west India. Though it was only a week of walking she remembers training for months: 'I was just so excited and the trip was absolutely fantastic.

Smitten with the trekking life, upon her return she wrote to all the adventure-travel companies. In the end she landed a consultancy job with Australian Himalayan Expeditions. Although desk-bound from Monday to Friday. Fear seized the opportunity to spend her weekends sampling AHE's various Australian adventures. As well as qualifying as a guide in cross-country skiing



After six years of full-time guiding, Fear still looks blissfully happy at work. Shown here with porters at Tagnag village after a successful ascent of Nepal's Mera Peak (6461 metres), April 1999.

and rafting, and becoming qualified in wilderness first aid, she gained valuable self-assurance in her abilities

Around this time adventure travel was booming. Everyone, it seemed, was trekking in Nepal and discovering the pleasures of waking up to tea in bed and views of the spectacular mountains Machapuchare or Ama Dablam through the tent door

For Fear, to be at the hub of it all and to share the buzz of Australians trekking to the roof of the world felt like a dream come true. I just used to love going to work', she recalls. Fifteen years later she remains an enthusiastic advocate of wanderlust: Travel is accessible to everybody in every possible way, for the full length of your life. It's just a really positive thing.

At a personal level, being away and mixing with diverse personalities has brought other changes. When I started out I was skiing nearly every weekend of the season and I was very keen on triathlons. Then somehow I got taken down the path of partying and socialising, she says with a chuckle. 'It was great-you find out all these other good things about life. Travel taught me all that...all these other ideas people have and ways of doing things.

One of these different dimensions was mountaineering. During her time at AHE. Fear joined a trek to Makalu (8481 metres) which not only confirmed her affinity for the trekking experience but also demonstrated a capacity to function well at lofty altitudes. Encouraged by this she did a mountaineering course in New Zealand. However, it wasn't until a foray into Africa where she climbed Mts Kenya and Kiliman-

'There are no quick routes to being good in the mountains.'

jaro, that the scope to combine climbing with truly dramatic surroundings really sank in. 'Seeing these exotic places made me realise that there's so much more to attract one rather than this narrow, hardcore thing about whether you can muscle up an ice face or not

By the late 1980s the adventure-travel bubble hadn't exactly burst, but it was deflating. Fear had quit AHE to go to Africa and 'see the world'. Back in Sydney she got caught up in a transition period when big travel-industry fish were taking smaller fry.

After five years of managing Wilderness Expeditions, the outfit was gobbled up by a restructured World Expeditions. She was more or less back where she started. But not quite, because this time her contract was a roving brief to lead high-altitude treks and reconnoitre new trips

It has proven to be a role well suited to her interests and talents. Over the past six years Fear has been at the helm of more than 30 high-altitude treks or climbs in the Himalavas, Karakoram and Andes. These include four arduous treks to K2's Base Camp and five separate expeditions leading groups to the summit of Nepal's Mera Peak (6461 metres). She takes guiding seriously. Unlike some maverick climbers who struggle to conceal their disdain for clients, Fear's personal history and commercial savvy have made her alert to her professional responsibilities

When you take a group, everything is about giving', she says, 'making things work for the others. It's not about leading from the front; it's about encouraging people to take responsibility for their own actions and allowing them to integrate-it's opening the door to achieving something if you work together. That's what winning is for me.

Worthy aims, but how does she deliver the goods? Fear admits that clients often wonder how they will go, given that she doesn't look particularly big and strong. There is also the concern of being a woman in the man's world of the Indian subcontinent. My way of dealing with that is being organised, planning ahead and making good decisions. I can't be brute strong under the strong world be stready and enduring and consistent with people, especially when

things turn ugly. On the subject of guiding, Fear is eloquent and persuasive. She's proud of her record and of the fact that she hasn't had any problems with local crews with which she's worked, or lost the respect of any group. It doesn't faze her that many of her clients are men. Indeed, she sees being a female leader as a positive: 'A lot of blokes lose their temper pretty quickly because they have this thing about winning or being seen to be winning and not losing face.' She also observes that a lot of the brash, professional types who want to make mountaineering their thing because they think it's glamorous often really struggle after 26 days in the hills. They tend to run out of gas towards the end; they just want to go home', she says. 'There are no quick routes to being good in the

While Fear's pronouncements can sound like the stuff of leadership manuals, they are backed by a genuine appreciation of the group experience. When I talked with her she was fresh from another Mera Peak trip. In one way the success of this expedition can be measured by the fact that seven in the party of twelve (some aged 49 or over) made the summit. (Even more impressively, on the previous Mera Peak expedition she led, the entire party of 12, including a 65-year-old man, made the summit.) But equally important to her was the remarkable prevailing spirit of the trip and the unusual level of har-

mountains.

mony among team members. 'A sense of humour makes all the difference and everyone in this group was just so damn funny'

Fear revels in the opportunity to share her howledge through guiding. It also serves as an effective antidote to the self-obsession and arrogance that often efflict eitle mountaineering. It gets a bit boring being consumed by your passions and goals, admits Fear. At the same time, leading groups at altitude bolters a store of knowledge on which she can draw for her own expeditions. Observation is so much of what mountaineering is about; the more you know about yourself and the elements, the better your decision making and self-management can be."

A year before the Cho Oyu climb, Fear led a private expedition on which she and two other team members became the first Australians to reach the top of Makalu II (7680 metres) in Nepal. Of the five expeditions in the area at the time, theirs was the only one to succeed in its objective (two were for Makalu II and three were for Makalu). For Fear it was a difficult trip, not



Fear at the base of Makalu II (7680 metres) in Nepal. In 1997 she led a private expedition on which she and two other team members became the first Australians to reach the top.

just because of the effort required to get up the mountain, but also because of the extra burden of being responsible for team organisation and finances. I realise now that I didn't delegate enough; she says. In the wake of this expedition she has a strong preference to attempt the higher, more technical peaks in such a way that she can be self-reliant and independent

Such a strategy might not be quite so easy to adopt when it comes to Everest. She recognises the need to brace herself for the politics and logistics associated with this mountain. Despite all the 'hoo-ha', Fear is drawn to the challenge, acknowledging the deep respect that the Nepalese still hold for the peak and for those who make it to the peak and for those who make it to the top. Like most climbers, Fear is wary of plotting too far beyond her next peak. Nevertheless, depending on the outcomes on Shisha Pangma and Everest, K2 does indeed hover on the horizon as a long term goal. It's such a beautiful mountain, and challenging in every possible way, she says. I think to win the summit would be one of the most extraordinary thinss?

How far does this ambition go? Will she still be chasing extreme summits in ten years' time? 'Oh no. I don't think so. I wouldn't want to get into the racket of just going and going...eventually you'll come unstuck: there are just too many factors to control. I also don't think it's healthy to fly solo all the time; it's very egocentric. When not away in the mountains her base is a roomy unit on Sydnev's lower North Shore with an outlook over bush. To keep herself earthed to the kind of reality most of her guiding clients routinely experience she regularly logs in for office time at the Sydney office of World Expeditions and does occasional stints behind the sales counter at nearby Mountain Designs, one of her sponsors, Although guiding groups provides a kind of makeshift companionship and there is a network of hometown friends, Fear's nomadic existence does come at a price: 'Mv lifestyle is not really suited to stable relationships. It's so hard to make it happen simultaneouslythe family thing, social life, financial stability and doing what's in your heart.

your heart."

Whatever the future holds, it's impossible to imagine Fear—now 36—turning her back on the travelling and adventuring life that has given her so much. She recognises how her career has evolved over time and is conscious of the surprisingly high burn-out' rate among professional climbers and guides. Above all, she greatly admires the friends and mentors who have been able en able.

to stay involved and make a lasting contribution to the outdoors. 'I think there's lots you can put back, encouraging young people to get out and do something useful', she says.

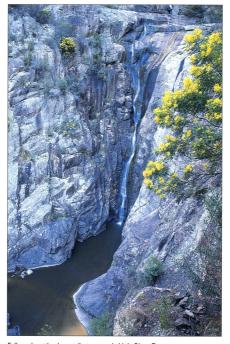
Sue Fear might be reaching for the clouds, but her feet are firmly on the ground. She welcomes the inevitable attention and other rewards that flow from success on the world's highest peals. At the same time her motion of winning has as much to do with the rewards of being there for the long haul as with the euphoria of 'topping out'. As she says: 'I really like to think that 'Ill still be pottering along the trial when I'm sixty or

See page 25 for Quentin Chester's bio.

seventy.'

The heart of the Victorian Alps

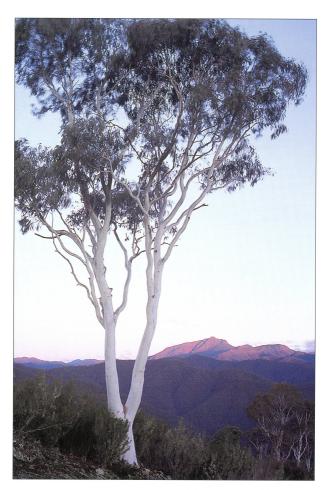
Breathtaking beauty and variety, by Mike Bowman

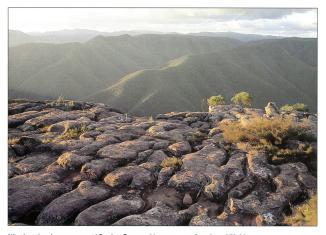


Falls and wattle above tributary creek, Little River Gorge.

Icicles under overhang. Looking towards Mt Kent from Snowy Bluff.







Weathered rock pavement and Butcher Country ridges at sunset, from Long Hill ridge.



From slaving over a hot stove at work to pounding the surface of a squash court each week, Mike Bowmar's lungs yearn for that fix of fresh mountain air to trigger the single-minded pursuits of a wildermess photographer. Mike's backfrop in the bio photo is the summit of photo is the summit of Mt Manfred, Tasmania.

The sun setting on Mt Cobbler, from Mt Typo.





Dart River. With a dusting of fresh snow on the peaks above and cows grazing in the valley, we set off on the four-wheel-drive track to Aspiring Hut, the Rob Roy Glacier peeping at us from a side valley.

Miraculously for New Zealand, and despite the recent rain, we arrived at Aspiring Hut with dry feet. The hut was built by the New Zealand Alpine Club and is owned by it although a National Park warden is stationed there to collect fees. We discussed where exactly in the floor-to-ceiling windows Mt Aspiring might finally reveal itself. With gas for cooking, new flush loos, mattresses, a library and a morning weather forecast, the hut soon became very popular and at \$NZ16 a person quite profitable, too. Retreating climbers who had spent fruitless days waiting for the weather to clear entertained us with stories of crazy deeds. A well-weathered lady described her climb of Mt Aspiring 34 years before to a frail-looking childhood friend visiting from England, who had just carried a pack for the first time. The hut began to fill with many nationalities and ages. Then we heard them and cringed just a little as the loud voices of unmistakably Australian blokes burst into the room. Seven of them. doctors Mark, Peter and lan, along with lawvers Duncan, Paul, Randall and Bead. They were let loose from wives children and work for a boys' week in the bush.

Mt Aspiring appeared at dusk causing a frenzy of activity as everyone rushed outside for the impromptu photo session. Named in 1857 by surveyor | T Thompson, who described it as a "lofty, conical peak," Mt Aspiring stands alone as a 3033 metre monolith of snow and ice. Its distinct shape was created by glacier ice backing up to a common point during a previous ice age

'Give me Aussie March flies and leeches any day.'

and scooping out cirques on each side to form a glacial horn. The mountain forms part of the Mt Aspiring National Park which was proclaimed in 1964 and also contains the Rees, Dart and Matukituki vallevs. The area around Mt Aspiring was first explored by Maori looking for greenstone and perhaps hunting the now extinct moa. After the arrival of Europeans the lower parts of the valleys were used for grazing sheep and sawmilling. During the 1860s gold was discovered, leading to an influx of people into the area; however, mountaineering and associated tourism didn't really begin until the 1890s. The first successful climb of Mt Aspiring was not

until 1909 when Major Bernard Head, with guides Jack Clarke and Alex Graham, reached the summit by French Ridge and the Bonar Glacier beneath Mt Aspiring's South Face. For several decades after this the summit was reached only sporadically. New routes were eventually pioneered and today the peak is climbed regularly from many different directions.

ent directions.

Back inside Aspiring Hut we were soon acquainted with our new companions by way of that great back country tice breaker, free chocolate, and my eagerness to examine Duncan's brand-new camera. Their titnerary was identical to ours, but thank goodness our menu was infinitely better than two-minute noodles three times a day for six days, with a freezed-nythrown in occasionally. As for their gear, it all looked brand-new in fact, it looked as though it had all come from the same shop, but they assured us that most of it had been used on their inaugural trip along Tasmania's South Coast Track the year before.

Several others were also planning to climb to Cascade Saddle the next day and we had heard that there was quite a lot of snow on top. It was going to be a long, steep climb and, since I'm no speedster on hills, we decided to start early to be assured of a prime camp-site with a view. Against our better judgment we decided to sleep in the hut to be sure of getting away at a reasonable time with a dry tent. This was a



great mistake. The snoring was unbelievable. Unbasins from several different directions penetrated all my clothes (which were immed over my head) in even the remotest corner of the spacious hut. After a steepless night I swore I denever stay in a hut again. Even so, we were first on the track, leaving the lads still guzzling their breakfast of two minute noodles laced with anti-inflammatories.

Mt Aspiring disappeared behind the trees as we trundled onwards and ever upwards Bonas Clacier. Soon afterwards we reached the tree line and were able to see both up and down the Matukituki It was still a long way up to the Plylon at 1835 metres, our highest goal for the day, and the route was becoming steeper and more exposed. It reminded us of the Western Arthurs in Southwest Banamia, but on a grander scale. Vestiges of snow began to appear and it soon became ankle deep and stippery as we neared the Pylon, a knoll providing stunning views of the Dart Glacier. Cascade

we crossed an almost surreal landscape of gentler slopes and alpine fields on a broad shelf to the saddle. At the edge of the plateau Cascade Crede, once a hanging glacier, makes a suicidal leap hundreds of metres to the valley floor below, almost directly on top of Aspiring Hut. As Cascade Saddle returned into view, so did the magnificent Dart Glacier. It felt as though we could almost reach out and touch the glacier with our left hand, while disping our toes in the Mattakitus River. They seemed very close.



A good pair of gaiters will keep the icy water at bay for a few quick steps. Greg Smith attempting to cross Cascade Creek without getting his feet wet or breaking a leg.

through the relatively dry rainforest. Keas, those big, green, cheeky parrois vailed at us from above. When I had last visited New Zealand, more than ten years before, there had seemed to be keas everywhere, destroying camps less, wrecking huts and quiz-zically examining your every move. Since then there has been a campaign to stop people feeding keas and attracting them to huts and other populated places. We saw very few of these beautiful but naughty birds on this trip and I hope this is due to the policy mentioned above rather than to an overall decline in numbers.

After some time climbing a forested ridge, a sudden break in the trees gave us our first stunning views up the Matukituki valley to Mt Aspiring and beyond. From this higher perspective we were able to see the full extent of French Ridge and the

Creek, the Matukituki valley and Mt Aspiring. It was a panorama of mountainous magnificence made all the more special by sunshine and clear, blue skies—definitely worthy of a lunch stop.

As we reluctantly prepared to leave, strange noises began to drift up from below. Was it.a kea? No, just the gradual appearance of a veteran Queensland rugby team, walking sticks and all.

It was a difficult descent to Cascade Creek 275 metres below. In some places the smooth, glaciated rocks were disguised by ten centimetres or so of wet snow, making them treacherously slippery. Paul was taking it very slowly, trying to protect a knee reconstructed 20 vears earlier.

The creek cut a very sharp glacial valley, with rocks so shiny and smooth they were almost too glary to look at. On the far side

Without signs of a change in the weather, we set up camp on a small ledge 50 metres or so below the saddle. In an otherwise still and quiet evening, sun-softened chunks of ice periodically tumbled down the face of the glacial cirque, accompanied by great cracks and booms which seemed totally out of proportion to the amount of ice falling.

At dusk we joined the lads at their camp just above the saddle for a clear sunset and watched Mt Aspiring change from brilliant orange to pink, then purple as the light faded.

The next morning we could hardly believe our luck as the Dart Glacier glowed in the morning sunlight. I also discovered the truth in the numerous warnings about slippery, wet grass slopes as I slid upturned turtle-style on my pack for several metres down the slope.

The glacier mesmerised us and we took photos every few minutes as each aspect caught our attention. Riverlike, inviting then suddenly savage, blue then drify grey hattling to move forward, wounded and defeated. Unlike the Fox and Franz Josef Glaciers, the Dart has been in rapid declire for many years. It is now a small valley glacier, but at its peak during the last ice age about 18 000 years ago it was part of an enormous glacier system that terminated at the southern end of Lake Wakatipu, about 135 kilometres from its present location. Now it retreats at about 50 metres a year-about five kilometres since 1850.

Walkers below us in the valley gave a persective to the landscape by appearing as ants dwarfed by the scenery. They were all going in different directions. As we soon discovered, this was because there were rock cairns all over the place.

At the snout of the glacier the Dart River spews forth from a cave of dirty ice. As I pulled out my camera, the lens cap came off and with growing dismayl worked it bounce in gigantic leaps down the slope before finally coming to rest on a lapse rock at the glacier's mouth. As I clambered down to retrieve it, the 'Are you mad' gesticulations of my partner Greg turned to 'Stay where you are' as he too, pulled out his camera.

Our passing of the Marshall and Hesse Glaciers was accompanied by thunderous applause as chunks of ice and rock tumbled

Info

Where Mt Aspiring National Park, South Island, New Zealand. The walk begins near Wanaka and ends near Glenorchy. Why Glorious mountain scenery and glaciers including the Dart

Glacier.

Grade O medium grade, suitable for fit, experienced walkers. The track is well marked and easy to follow. Cascade Saddle is vey steep but neither mountaineering equipment nor rockclimbing gear is required. However, it is still an alpine environment subject to sudden

can snow at any time.

Length The walk can be done in five
days but it is best to allow six
in case of delays due to bad
weather. The walk to Rees
Saddle makes a great rest day

changes in the weather and it

in the middle.

Access Transport can easily be arranged at each end.

Maps Mount Aspiring 1:150 000 Infomap.

Aspiring 1:50 000 Infomap.

Track notes

The Department of Conservation (NZ) pamphlet Rees and Dart Tracks is available from the DOC, Glenorchy Visitor Centre, PO Box 2, Glenorchy.

Phone 64 3 442 9937.

DuFresne, Jim 1998,
Tramping in New Zealand,
Lonely Planet.



It was difficult to keep walking when the views were so spectacular. Our camera shutters were constantly busy as the Dart Glacier seemed to present a slightly different aspect every few minutes along the track.

down. With the young and active Dart River by our side, we were soon in view of Dart Hut, perched high on the bank of Snowy Creek. The camping area is on the opposite side of the creek to the hut, so we reasoned that it would be safe from snorers and luckily we were still too high to be bothered by many sandlies. A wire bridge complete with broken boards and possum poo joins the camping ground to the hut. Whiz-bang

flush loos with a helicopter-emptied septic tank may have been a good idea, except that they were closed due to drought.

The drought soon ended—luckily not until after tea-producing constant, steady rain all night. We were just about set for an extended sleep in and cuddle the next morning when the clouds suddenly cleared, sending us scampering off after the lads to Rees Saddle. There was a bit of mud

Inothing compared to Tasmania), but we arrived in good time at Rees Saddle with dry feet. Again, we were able to lounge about in the sunshine dreaming up routes to the rock- and snow-covered peaks all around. Maybe we could do an alpine-climbing course, Greg? 'Don't you think it's about time we bought a house, Jill? From a knoll above the saddle we admired the very ratin' Mark quizzed us on possible tours for his team the following year.

The next morning Greg and I continued on down the Dart valley on what was now the Rees-Dart Track proper. The lads were a bit slower to get going. They were beginhuts. They arrive in clouds and attack at once. After a few days the bites begin to itch intensely and irresistibly. I already had scabs all over me from a previous walk despite wearing long sleeves, gloves and copious amounts of insect repellent. Give me Aussie March flies and leeches any day.

Eventually it became impossible to stop for more than a moment without being savaged. The day was still a long way from being over and we were getting tired. Our nerves began to frazzle. Stress levels rose. Greg seemed to be speeding off ahead. It was with relief that we finally arrived at Daleys Flat Hut, which had fly screens. Paul, Mark, Randall and Bead had also just are

the only introduced species wreaking havoc with the native flora and fauna. We saw signs warning us that baits had been laid for stoats and observed helicopters laden with deer carcasses. The unique birds of New Zealand are probably in an even more precarious position than our Australian marsunials.

Our last morning entailed an early start to meet Eric the Fun Yak man. It was an easy walk along more river flats and round a healdand to our rendezous, where the rest of the lads were dancing the sandfly samba while trying to strike camp. For those not canoeing, the last section of the walk is a long day's march which has to be started very early in order to catch the one and only but as the end. Instead, we had arranged to paddle the last day in inflatable cances which were brought up by iet boat (jet boating is common on the lower stretches of the Daff Birch.)

After a short but exhilarating jet-boat ride, feigning passes at rocks and cliff-faces, we reached Eric's collection of bright red, inflatable Fun Yaks. There were problems right



from the start when brothers Mark and Paul boarded each end of a canoe with Duncan in the middle. The craft sunk at both ends like an upturned banana. Arguments over Mark's steering ability led to an ungracious capsize in the first minor rapid. Back in the canoe, they just missed impaling the poor craft on a branch that we had been specifically asked to avoid. Being wet already, there was little excuse not to get wetter and a series of water fights ensued. with another fellow traveller, Miss Alberta, proving to be a good shot from our canoe. Luckily it was hot and sunny as the water hadn't warmed up much since it had left the glacier. Most of the paddling was gentle and peaceful, with plenty of time to admire the magnificent views. We stopped for lunch at a clear creek which had cut a deep gorge into the rocks that was wide enough for a canne to turn around.

Just as my bottom began to notice the hard canoe seat we arrived at the van. The canoes were simply deflated, rolled into bundles and tied on the roof. After a celebratory drink with the lads we were off to Queenstown again, this time to our tent in the caravan park and a pacecful nights sleep in which to dream up our next adventure.



Camping in the alpine meadows before Cascade Saddle is forbidden, but this ledge a little below the saddle provides one of the most picturesque camp-sites imaginable. As the sun set we toasted the Dart Glacier and it responded with ominous booms and occasional fallina ice. Grea Smith

ning to feel those old rugby injuries. What a silly game—why not just carry a 20 kilogram pack up and down hills all weekend instead? 'What's the dose rate of those tables again? we heard one doctor ask another. A good thing that there isn't any drug testing in bushwalking.

We soon found ourselves dawdling-engineers, of which Greg is one, just have to take photos of landslides and tree avalanches, no matter how many they've already passed. As the valley opened out we reached vast expanses of golden grass, standing hay carpeting the valley floor, created by cold air draining off the glacier and depressing the tree line. Lunch was yet another lazy affair in the sun admiring to Curzon Glacier and the Dart River, which was beginning to weave and braid. How were, we had a long way to travel, and as we slowly descended, the dreaded sandfiles began to appear.

Sandflies, tiny and midge-like, are the scourge of New Zealand walking and, I suspect the reason why there are so many

rived, but their fearless leader decided that they would camp in sandfly heaven further down the river, so the troops were lined as an arrong the control of the control of the arrong the control of the control of the started a brevi middle the little river was no way! was going to sleep in the hut, but it was worth paying four dollars just to be able to sit inside about from the sandflies and, finding that the rest of their team had left decided to mutiny and stay at the hut.

A possum trapper was also staying in the Int. Australian brush-tailed possums were originally released into New Zealand in 1858 to establish a fur trade and have since become a serious pest. Due to low fur prices—and thus decreased hunting—and the high costs of other forms of control, the numbers of possums continue to increase adarmingly. Pethaps animal-rights campaigners should encourage people to by New Zealand brush-tailed possum for costs to save the unique and fragile New Zealand environment. However, possums are not



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Salty air, surf, and sand beneath

Grant Dixon describes Tasmania's great coastal walk, the South Coast Track



THERE ARE MANY OPTIONS FOR WALKERS who wish to experience Tasmania's world-renowned wilderness, but there is nothing better than a multiday bushwalk to immerse yourself in the place. The most popular walk is the hut-based Overland Track (featured in Wild no 63). However, for those seeking a slightly more remote or challenging outing, or who wish to see some of the spectacular costline instead of the mountains, the South Coast Track is highly recommended.

When to go

Access is easier and the weather generally better in summer. Late summer (February -March) probably has the most settled weather, and perhaps fewer walkers.

Warnings and other issues

The walk traverses the Southwest National Park, part of the Tasmanian wilderness World Heritage Area. This is a Fuel Stove Only Area, with camp-fires permitted only at the designated fire sites at Surprise Bay and Little Deadmans Bay. However, walkers are encouraged to use fuel stoves at all times.

Despite considerable expenditure on track works over the past 15 years (which have been undertaken mainly for environmental reasons), the South Coast Track remains a basic track. Rivers are not bridged and can

become unfordable in flood, windfalls can locally obscure the track and there are deep mud sections in wet weather.

Bad weather can make the walk considerably more challerging and may cause delays. Walkers should be prepared for this by carrying extra food. Poor weather can prevent aircraft access to Melaleuca and cause flooding of the various rivers. High tides and storms can render South Cape Rivulet difficult to cross and the coastal route at Lion Rock dangerous.

/laps

The entire route is covered by the South Coast Walks 1:100 000 Tasmap. More detail is avail-



able from the 1:25 000 Tasmap series, but only three of the four sheets required have been published—Recherche, Prion and Cox.

Further reading

- Chapman, John 1998, South-west Tasmania—A guide book for bushwalkers, fourth edition, published by the author.
- Collins, Ken 1990, South-west Tasmania— A Natural History and Visitors Guide, Heritage Books.

Access

Cockle Creek, the eastern end of the track, can be reached by bus from Hobart every

Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday from December to March. At other times a taxi or hitchhising are the only alternatives. Melaleuca, the western end of the track, can be reached only by chartered light aircraft (which operate fairly frequently during summer) or by foot on the Port Davey Track from Scotts Peak (thereby extending the walk by four days).

Camping

There are no camping restrictions on the South Coast Track but walkers are encouraged to use the major established campsites at the various beaches and rivers along the route to avoid the continued expansion

The South Coast Track traverses the sliver of sand that is Prion Beach in this aerial view. Beyond lies New River Lagoon, with Precipitous Bluff rising 1200 metres from its far shore. The flight into Melaleuca, if by way of the coast, provides a good overview of the country to be traversed during the walk. Both photos Grant Dixon



Grade

Moderate; however, inclement weather can make the walk quite challenging

Length Five to seven days

Type Wilderness walk

Wilderness walking with remote beaches, button-grass plains and spectacular scenery

Region South-west Tasmania

Best time Summer

Special points

The walk traverses a Fuel Stove Only Area, so campfires are generally not permitted. Parts of the track can be quite muddy in wet weather. The crossing of the Ironbound Range is steep and enters alipine terrain where

conditions can be extreme in poor weather.

of walker impact. All major camp-sites have pit toilets and these should be used wherever possible.

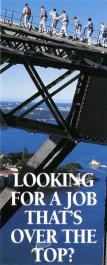
The walk

The South Coast Track can be walked in either direction. I prefer to fly into Melaleuca and walk back to the roadhead at Cockle Creek. However, walking west from Cockle Creek gives you the option to restock with food at Melaleuca (which you must arrange to be flown in before your walk) and continue with other walks in the area.

If you fly into Melaleuca early in the morning there will be time to explore the area briefly, check out the orange-bellied







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parrots (one of Australia's rarest birds) from the bird hide and still make it to Cox Bight in the afternoon. This is a few hours' level walk south along the broad, button-grassfloored valley.

This short first day should give your shoulders a chance to get used to the few days' extra food you packed to allow time to laze on the beaches and otherwise explore the 60 kilometre coastline ahead of you. And 60 kilometre Coastliph is an ideal location to start putting this approach into practice. There are two sheltered camps sites, a cool but refreshing freshwater lagoon behind the beach subject to ides and several kilometres of flat, white sand, of seat that light aircraft can actually land on the beach; subject to ides and weather, this is an alternative access to the start of the walk.

Despite its name, the South Coast Track traverses country some distance inland for part of its length. The longest inland section pagins at Buoy Creek, at the eastern end of Cox Bight. From here, a level section precedes the very sharp ascent of the Red Point Hills, the first of a number of high points on the track which have extensive views. The gradual descent to Faraway Creek leads to a camp-site, however, there is a larger and more attractive camp-site at Louisa Creek a little further east.

The track then sidles the Spica Hills before crossing the button-grass Louisa Plains on a lengthy section of planking. Installed in the late 1980s, the planking was the first such work on the South Coast Track (the Louisa Plains bogs had quite an infamous reputation in the 'old' days, so spare a thought for the walkers of not so long ago when you encounter the relatively few boggy sections which remain elsewhere on the track). The easy walking made possible by the planking also allows you to look away from your feet and take in the surrounding landscape, including the broad expanse of the plains and the ominously steep slopes of the Ironbound Range which looms imposingly ahead.

The Louis Plains are bounded eastward by the band of forest along the meandering Louisa River. The Louisa River is the largest stream crossed by the track and must be forded—there is a rope in position to assist your balance. If it is raining and the river appears fordable when you arrive (tar. carel), it may be prudent to camp on the far bank to avoid being held up by any overnight flooding.

night flooding. Most walkers consider the crossing of the Ironbound Range the most physically demanding part of the South Coast Track and with good reason. The 900 metre climb up the western slope of the range is steep and largely without respite. Given the open nature of the country, an early start is recommended if it looks like being a hot day. However, this open terrain means that you can stop almost anywhere and be able to take in extensive views while you recover. On a more cautionary note, the range is also very exposed and, if the weather is poor and the range shrouded in cloud, it will be more pleasant to spend a

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rest day exploring the rainforest along the banks of the Louisa River.

The track traverses the only alpine country of the walk atop the Ironbound Range, with views along the entire south coast and out to the various offshore islands in clear weather. It then enters forest for the descent of the south-eastern side of the range. Some sections with roots require care with foot placement, and you may have rather tubbery knees by the time you complete the long descent and reach the wet plain before Deadmans Bay. There is good camping beside the large creek where the track reaches the coast.

From Turna Beach, the eastern part of Deadmans Bay, the track then follows the coast round Menzies Bluff to Prion Beach with some fine views through windows in the coastal forest and scrub. Prion Beach is probably the most spectacular beach on the south coast, a stretch of sand receding into the sea-spray haze with the distinctive form of Precipitous Bluff rising beyond the dunes. Remove your boots and give yourself the pleasure of unconstrained walking along the rise kilometres of sand, the roar and foam of the Southern Ocean surf your constant.

The deep and wide outlet of New River Lagoon must be crossed from Prion Beach and two dinghies are provided for you to row across. Please ensure that a boat is left on each bank for other walkers after you have completed your crossing. There is a sheltered camp-site at the boat crossing, however, drinkine water can be unreliable here.

The track traverses the crest of vegetated dunes to Milford Creek. The waters of this creek are particularly dark, stained by button grass and other vegetation inland, and the ford of this creek can appear much deeper than it actually is. From Milford Creek the route follows the base of steep dunes (wading may be necessary if the lagoon level is high), then heads cross country behind Point Cecil to the Rocky Plains. Another spacious and sheltered camp-site lies on the banks of Tyler Creek, with Osmiridium Beach a short distance downstream.

Soon after leaving the Cominidium Beach camp-site the track climbs into forest, the landscape changing character from the open plains and beaches to the west. However, the track one from the length of lengt

A steep ascent, then a somewhat gentler descent to Shoemaker Bay dispense with the next spur. Traverse the dark sand and rounded dolerite boulders—with views of the spectacular Fluted Cliffs—to the waterfall at the eastern end of the beach. Another spacious and sheltered camp-site lies above.

You can take some of the sting out of the steep climb of the South Cape Range by telling yourself that it is the last major ascent of the walk—and there is a pleasant

opening near the summit in which to recline and take in the final view back along the coast and across the various islands. Look for the isolated Mewstone in the distant haze. Some muddy areas must be traversed before the eastern descent, again in forest, to the button-grass opening of Blackhole Plain. After another short climb and forested descent you will suddenly emerge into the open on the bank of South Cape Rivulet This must be crossed, which can be difficult at high tide or after heavy rain. The best camp-site is on the eastern bank adjacent to the lagoon. Here, or at the camp-site near Lion Rock (one to one-anda-half hours further east), is an appropriate place to spend your last night on the track.

Continue eastwards along the beach, over a small headland, then along another beach. Now there are two options. A signposted track climbs high over Coal Bluff, with ex-



Two dinghies are on opposite banks of the New River Lagoon. After you have used them, ensure that they are dragged well up the beach and secured. Last summer one dinghy was washed away (it has since been replaced), causing problems for walkers.

cellent views in places. Alternatively, you can scramble over the boulders below coastal cliffs to Lion Rock, a vaguely sphinx-like rocky island just offshore. If the tide is high or a storm swell is running, the inland route is definitely the one to choose.

Just past Lion Rock the track reaches the last beach on the South Coast Track. This beach is a popular day- or overnight destination from Cockle Creek and the track from here is well constructed and obvious. From the eastern end of the beach, climb up and round the rocky headland with its expansive view across South Cape Bay, then traverse the coastal scrub and heath of Blowhole Valley to the roadhead at Cockle Creek.

Grant Dixon works part time for the Tasmanian Parks & Wildlife Service and has spent much of his free time exploring and photographing remote parts of the world. However, he is always drawn home to the wild natural landscapes of South-west Tasmania.



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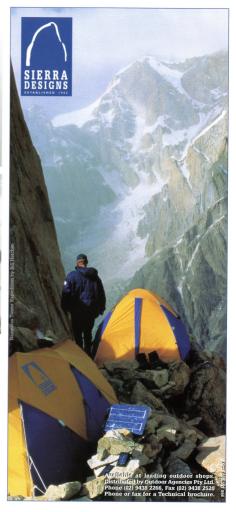
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Huts, holes and history

Martin Chalk experiences the sweeping plains and big skies of the northern Kosciuszko National Park

KOSCIUSZKO NATIONAL PARK: ALPINE grassland, snow-covered mountains, Nordic skining, crowded resorts. These are some of the more popular images which come to mind when talking about Australia's largest alpine National Park. However, nothing could be less factual when considering the northern end of this park.

The region north of the Snowy Mountains Highway consists of remote and forested mountains, Tantangara Reservoir and some 15 individual frost plains. With elevations of the order of 1200-1400 metres, some of these plains were used extensively for gazaing until the 1970s. The milder dimate in these regions, which means few bitzards in winter, allowed a few hardy souls to live here permanently, while others travelled with sheep and cattle each spring from as far away as Queanbeyan and Denform s far aways a Queanbeyan and Denform s far aways a Queanbeyan and Denforms for aways a Queanbeyan and Denforms for aways a Queanbeyan and Denforms for a great far and the forms of the for

iliquin to make use of their summer 'snow leases'

The legacy of these people is one of scattered timber fences, old homesteads (in various states of repair) and wonderfully rich names such as Boggy Plain, Cooleman Caves and Gurrangorambla Flat.

The walk described will take you to three frost plains and four old dwellings. The terrain is easy to moderate but is in a re-



mote region. The walking on the first and last days is limited to allow time for travel to and from the region.

When to go

Spring and autumn are the most comfortable times of year to visit this area. The days are cool and the nights cold. Summer nights are beautifully mild but the days can be

very warm and the plains have little shelter. In addition, the March flies plague visitors in the warmer months. Winter has its own problems. The plains can be snow-covered and very skiable, but be prepared to do some walking. Access is also more difficult—see below.

Safety

The remoteness of this area and the lack of signposted tracks require confident navigation and a well-prepared party. The weather is very changeable; be ready for everything regardless of the time of year.

Maps

The Rules Point 1:25 000 Central Mapping Authority topographic map covers the entire walk

Further information

Information on the conditions in the area can be obtained from the Tumut District of the New South Wales National Parks & Wildlife Service (NPWS); phone (02) 6947 4200. Open fires are not permitted during periods of total fire ban.

Access

This part of Kosciuszko National Park is approached from the Snowy Mountains Highway at Rules Point (about 55 kilometres north-west of Adaminaby). A prometres north-west of Adaminaby).

Grade Easy to moderate
Length Two to three days

Type Sweeping plains and big skies, history and exploration, caves, Nordie skiing

Region Northern Kosciuszko National

Best times Spring and autumn

Special points

Remote area, long drive in, changeable weather, brumbies. Respect the cleanliness of the area—use fuel stoves and take out all rubbish. inent stone gateway into the park is on the eastern side of the road. From here all the roads are dirt but are negotiable by twowheel-drive vehicles in dry conditions.

The road from the gate travels north through the park along the length of the Long Plain. After about 12 kilometres you cross a small bridge over the Murrumbidgee River not far from its source. It is interesting to reflect on the pristine state of the river at this point, which is relatively close to Canberra.

About one kilometre from the river crossing a track joins the road from the right. Follow this track to Cooinbil Hut (about one kilometre). The ford halfway along this road can be tricky for two-wheel-drive vehicles after rain. Cooinbil is frequented by horse riders and has ample space for car parking. The walk begins and ends here.

Access to the Long Plain can also be gained from the Canberra-Tumut road in the north. However, this is a four-wheel-drive track only and is subject to closure without notice, so it will not be considered further here.

The Long Plain road is closed at Rules Point from the Queen's Birthday long weekend in June to the NSW Labour Day long weekend in October. Access during this period must be by foot (or skis).

The walk

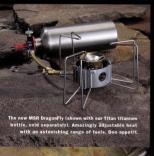
Before setting off, take time to look around Cooinbil. The area was used as a summer 'snow lease' from the 1860s. The present building, established by Frederick Campbell of Yarralumla (now the Governor-General's residence), dates from the early 1900s. A full history of the complex is presented inside the hut.

While inspecting the area, find the bridlepath which prominently heads north-east through the trees. This path gives easy access across the forested Gurrangorambla Range to the site of Harris Hut, which is the second historical site on the walk.

As you descend to the Cooleman Plain, you will see the site of Harris Hut on the right some 300 metres after leaving the tree or line. The hut was built as a residence by William and Irene Harris in 1933. After 11 years it was left unoccupied and it deteriorated until restoration in the 1970s. However, all was destroyed by fire in 1996—an emphasic reminder of the fragility of the refics of our rural beginnings. The Harris Hut site is a good lunch spot and offers the opportunity to soft through the ruins.

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Two kilometres east of the Harris Hut site is Cave Creek, which cuts through some of the most fascinating limestone country in south-eastern NSW. The treeless plain is incised by deep gorges and sink holes caused by weathering and the collapse of the limestone caves which underlie the area. Cave Creek is dry, except after heavy rain, and can be easily negotiated.

The creek leads to prominent cliffs which mark the beginning of Nicoles Gorge. The gorge provides opportunities to explore, ponder, photograph—and simply to rest. At various places interpretation signs erected by the NPWS describe the significance of selected features. Important among these is Murray Cave. Just 200 metres south of the cliffs on the southern side of the gorge, this 200 metre long cave is open for self-guided visits. Please respect the delicate nature of the formations and remember to wear shoes with apri- and don't droy out torch!

You could spend a full day enjoying Nicoles Carge. However, on our walk fading daylight and an approaching storm forced us to set off to find a suitable camp-site. The day conditions made the location of water a matter of some importance. All the creeks around the gorge seem to disappear underground; however, Seventeen Flat Creek in the southern part of the Cooleran Plain can be counted on for running surface water all vear round.

Day two

Originally, our walk was to include Pocket Hut and Howells Peak as part of the route to Old Currango. However, we awoke to steady rain and strong, gusty wind and chose to halve the day by visiting Bill Jones Hut on the way to Old Currango.

Bill Jones Hut is a corrugated iron, dirt floor affair which gave good service as a dry place to cook breakfast, and has a delightful setting just in the trees on the edge of the Cooleman Plain. Nevertheless, it did not tempt us to linger, so we set off for Old

Heading south through Blue Waterhole Saddle. Old Currango is only about 90 minutes' walk away. The Mosquito Creek fire track makes for easy going although the clearing through which Sally Tree Creek flows would be a pleasant alternative route in fine conditions.

The main obstacle on the Currango Plain is Mosquito Creek.
On our walk it was about 30 centimetres deep and flowing well. A vehicle track directly to Old Currango (not on the 1:25 000 map) leaves the fire track about 300 metres after it turns north-west. However, this track was not of any assistance in crossing the creek.

Old Currango dates back to the 1870s and is a well-restored and maintained homestead with four rooms and two fireplaces. The history of the place and its times can be read in the newspapers which cover the walls. The details of restoration activities are also displayed. This building is an important link with the memories of people and lifestyles long gone from the frost plains, so please treat it with respect.

Day three

After a night of gale-force winds and driving rain, our last day did not start any better than the second had ended. Plans to explore Tom O'Rourkes Peak were set aside due to continuing high wind, rain and fog. Instead, we decided to return to Cooinbil by the more sheltered route round the base of Skaines Mountain.



Captain Murray of Yarralumla was shown the caves of Cave Creek by Aborigines in 1837. Today's travellers can make their own journey of discovery at Murray Cave.

Skaines Mountain is reached by the Mosquito Creek fire track to Harrys Gap, lust as the fire track tharps cauplust as the fire track turns southwest, a prominent bridle path confitues in a north-westerly direction. Follow this well-trodden path for about 500 meters to a large, examply area and then follow your choice of the numerous bridle-paths in a clockwise direction round the tree line at the base of Skaines Mountain.

This last leg of the walk has sufficient elevation to gain good views across the Long Plain and yet offers shelter from wind and sun.

Martin Chalk lives and works in Canberra. As a member of the aviation industry he has seen much of the alpine National Parks from the air. However, he prefers the slower pace of bushwalking to gain their best impression. He has contributed to Wikif nos 54 and 64.

Northern Kosciuszko National Park



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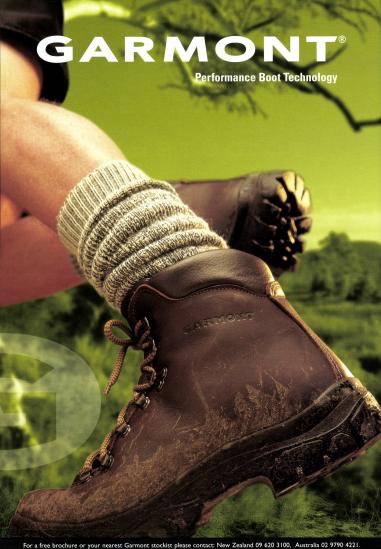
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WALKING boots

Stephen Down steps in for a closer look

HAVING SPENT MANY YEARS TRYING TO find hoots that will fit-and provide endless hours of pain-free walking-what hope would I have trying to sift through the huge number of boots on the market and rate the 'best boot' subjectively? The fact is that there is no 'best boot' because everyone's feet are different. The best boot for you may be an implement of torture for someone else

This survey attempts to show that there are many boots from which to choose. Not all boots are included; a sample from each boot manufacturer represented in the maior outdoors shops in Melbourne and Sydnev has been considered instead.

The article rates each boot using general terms that are easily understood. If you want to read more about the technical details regarding boot construction, refer to previous walking-boot surveys in Wild nos 64 and 50.



Don't buy new boots the day before you start an overnight bushwalk. Give your feet time to break them in. Huw Kingston

Buv right If boots feel uncomfortable, do not

- buy them The best way to establish whether boots fit is to walk around in them. Walking up and down stairs may indicate whether your toes will get crunched in the front, and whether your heel will slip. Your foot should be enclosed comfortably and firmly,
- and you should be able to wiggle When trying on boots, wear the socks in which you intend to walk.

your toes

- Most good outdoors shops will allow you to return boots that are still new. Wear them on carpet for a few days: take them back if you find them uncomfortable
- Do not expect to find perfect boots in the first shop you visit. If you do not find a boot after a few tries, don't give up.
- Do not expect to leave the shop and start a two-week walk. Let your boots get accustomed to your feet.
- There are generally three types of leather used in bushwalking boots: full-grain leather and Nubuck leather are considered top of the line; splitleather or suede is not as waterproof or durable.

Use

'Use' is a guide only to the intended activity for which each boot is built. 'Light day walk' indicates a boot suitable for carrying a day pack on bush tracks for a day. A boot rated as 'bushwalking' should be able to withstand the rigours of carrying a full rucksack for at least two days. 'Trekking' refers to walking on rough tracks carrying a day pack for at least two weeks. Note, however, that the 'use' was specified by the manufacturers

Weight

Generally, the heavier the boot, the more robust it will be. However, even the boots that are given a high durability/protection rating are not the heavy types of yesteryear. With modern technology, walking boots are becoming lighter but not necessarily flim-

Sole design

Very simply, a boot's sole can have either a single layer of a particular rubber comnound or more than one laver. A two-laver sole means that the boot's sole is constructed using different densities of rubber or synthetic rubber. The outer layer provides the grip and is hard-wearing, while the inner layer is usually of a less dense material to provide extra cushioning as well as support for the wearer's sole. 'Dualdensity is a common term used to describe two-layered soles.

Flexibility

A boot's flexibility points to its intended use. A flexible boot will not have the support needed for walking on rough, rocky tracks, whereas a stiff boot is overkill for walking along duckboards or a well-graded track for a day.

Ankle height

We wear boots to provide support for the ankle. The higher the boot, the more support it will give. A 'low' rating is given to boots that reach to about ankle height. 'Medium' is above the ankle, and 'high' is well above the ankle.

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The Sole: Scarpa selects or develops soles to provide optimum performance, and works closely with the two leading manufacturers, Vibram and Skywalk

Sole Bonding: The bonding of upper to sole is critical. The Scarpa method is an intricate procedure producing a bonding that's strong and reliable without adding extra weight.

> 'Blake sewn'-where the mid-sole is sewn to the upper inside the boot-means greater longevity as the

> > mid-sole becomes the element that holds

the boot together.

The Mid-sole: The mid-sole: the heart of the boot. All Scarpa bushwalking boots have anatomically shaped nylon mid-soles. Curved to cradle your foot; they're firm enough to stop stones pushing up through the sole. Designed to flex in

the right place, and by the right amount.

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There is no place too far.

dikiii	g boots											
		aşı	Weight, grams	Sole design	Flexibility	Ankle height	Jpper material	Synthetic waterproof lining	atte.	Durability/ protection	Jahre	Approx
aly			>	or Military				01 11 11				Ì
	Trail	Light day walk, trekking	580	Two-layer	Flexible	Medium	c	Yes	s s	001/2	•••	
A STATE OF	Taiga Granite Gore-Tex	Bushwalking, trekking Bushwalking	660 750	Two-layer Two-layer	Medium	Medium High	C	Yes	S	***	•••	
	Graine Gole-lex	DUSHWAIKING	750	ino aye	mediani	. mg.						
nd Italy	Morbegno ¶	Rushwalking	675	Single-layer	Stiff	Medium	L	No	NW	****	0000	
	inolocyto [businessing		ongic aye								
stone Austr	alia											
	Style 208 †	Bushwalking	575	Two-layer	Flexible	Medium	L	No	S	••	•••	
p Australia			Y Y							45,000		
1	Razorback	Light day walk	713	Two-layer	Flexible/ medium	Medium	L	No	NW	00 1/2	••	
	Cooroy	Bushwalking, trekking	818	Two-layer	Medium/stiff	Medium	L	No	NW	•••	000	
	◀ Ellery	Trekking	875	Two-layer	Stiff .	Medium	L	No	NW	0001/2	•••	
ıbia China												
a	Gravel Crusher Mid	Light day walk	500	Two-layer	Flexible	Medium	С	No	s	••	000	
A	Woodpath Mid Cold Creek Boot	Trekking Light day walk,	725 775	Two-layer Two-layer	Medium	Medium Medium	L	Yes Yes	s	ee1/2	000	_
	(Quartz Mtn Hiker)	bushwalking										
en Korea				MANAGEMENT.	RESERVE .							
-	Ventura	Light day walk, trekking	400	Two-layer	Flexible	Low	С	No	S	●1/2	••	
	◀ 4×4	Bushwalking, trekking	550	Two-layer	Medium/stiff	Low	С	No	S	••	001/2	
	Polar Spire	As above	550	Two-layer	As above	Medium/high	С	Yes	S	00 1/2	•••	
ont Italy			600		Flexible	High	С	No	MW	••	001/2	
	◀ Mojave	Light day walk, bushwalking		Two-layer			1000					
	NU Syncro † ¶	Bushwalking	570	Two-layer	Flexible	High	С	Yes	S	na	na	
: China	Utah #	Light day walk,	680	Two-layer	Medium	Medium	L	No	S	••	•••	
	Transcender #	bushwalking Light day walk, bushwalking, trekking	680	Two-layer	Medium	Medium	L	Yes	s	00 1/2	•••	
	◀ Dakota #	Bushwalking, trekking	680	Two-layer	Medium	Medium	L	Yes	S	***	••••	
mandu Italy	/New Zealand		Tare		MANAGE .							
0	◀ Jura	Bushwalking, trekking	495	Single-layer	Flexible	Medium	С	No	S	••	001/2	
	Jura Proof Randonnee	As above As above	488 590	As above As above	Flexible	Medium High	C L	Yes	MW	001/2	001/2	W
		As above	390	As above	Medium	rigi		140	mv			M
ortiva Italy	Veget Anni State S											
	Tundra Gore-Tex Storm Lady	Light day walk Trekking	525 500	Two-layer Two-layer	Flexible	Low Medium	L C	Yes Yes	s w	***	•••	
A	■ Tibet	Bushwalking	700	Two-layer	Medium	Medium/high	L	Yes	MW	****	•••	г

Leather author not seen by referee The country listed after the manufacturer/brand name is the country in which the products are mode



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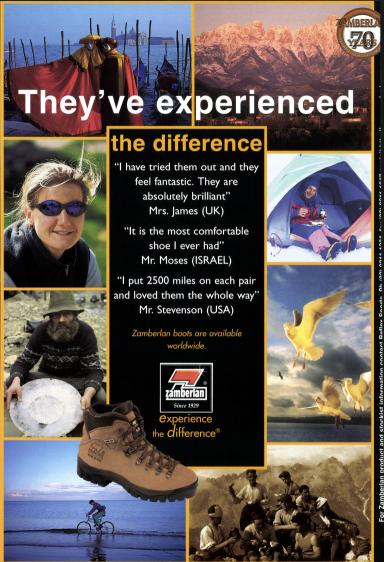


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ankun	g boots	ontinued										
		Use	Weight, grams	Sole design	Flexibility	Ankle height	Upper material	Synthetic waterproof lining	Lasts	Durability/ protection	Value	Approx
II China		Bushwalking	700	Two-laver	Medium	Medium	(No	MW	001/2	***	
	← Eagle † Eagle Waterproof	As above	750	Two-layer	Medium	Medium	c	Yes	MW	000	***	
**	Cordillera	As above	875	Two-layer	Medium	Medium	L	No	MW	•• 1/2	•••	
ail Korea/It	taly										-	
A	Solitude	Light day walk	560	Two-layer	Flexible	Medium	L	No	w	•••	•••	- 2
	Tundra	Bushwalking	725	Single-layer	Medium	Medium	L	No	MW	0001/2	•••	3
	Moraine	Trekking	900	Two-layer	Self	Medium	L	No	S	****	•••	:
ort China	◀ Rubble	Bushwalking	570	Two-layer	Stiff	Low	L	No	S	● 1/2	**	
	Ridgeway	Light day walk	506	Two-layer	Flexible	Low	L	Yes	s	••	••	- 2
	Antero	Bushwalking	531	Two-layer	Medium	Medium	L	Yes	s	66 1/2	••	
Boots Aus	PROPERTY AND ADDRESS OF THE PARTY OF THE PAR											
la.	◀ 220 Tweed	Bushwalking	950	Single-layer	Flexible	Medium	L	No No	S	***	••••	
	270 Tamar	Light day walk, bushwalking	825	As above	Flexible	Medium	L	No	S	••	•••	
1	101 Eclipse	Trekking	900	Two-layer	Medium	Medium	L	No	S	***	•••	
on China/I	Italy/Romania							(A) (A) (A)				
	Exit II Mid	Light day walk, bushwalking	528	Two-layer	Flexible/ medium	Medium	С	No	MW	••	•• ¹ / ₂	
	X-Adventure 7	Bushwalking, trekking	752	Two-layer	Medium/stiff	Medium	L	Yes	MW	00 1/2	•••	
J.	Fronterra 7 GTX	As above	823	Two-layer	As above	High	L	Yes	MW	•••	•••	
Italy												
	Trek	Bushwalking	650	Two-layer	Medium	Medium	L	No	NW, W	****	****	
	Lite Trek (Gore-Tex)	Trekking	600	Two-layer	Medium	Medium	С	Yes	MW	•••	•••	
	SL	Bushwalking	800	Two-layer	Stiff	High	L	No	S	****	•••	
ica USA									-			
3	Gothard TCY †	Bushwalking, trekking	740	Two-layer	Medium/stiff	Medium	С	Yes	MW	***	••••	
Bonne	Duna TCY # † Voyager TCY # †	Bushwalking Bushwalking, trekking	580 760	Two-layer Two-layer	As above Stiff	Medium High	С	Yes	W	001/2	000	
	voyager ICY # 1	businwaking, treixing	760	Iwo-tayer	Sun	ngii		165	mw	••••	•••	
a Italy												
	Janette †	Bushwalking, trekking	600	Two-layer	Medium	Medium	L	Yes	W	00 1/2	001/2	
	◀ Peak †	As above	750	Two-layer	Medium/stiff	Medium/high	L	Yes	S	●●● ¹ /2	•••	
3												
erlan Italy	Fell-Lite	Bushwalking	740	T	Stiff	Medium	L	No	MW	****	000	
5	Fell-Lite Hydrolite	Bushwalking As above	740	Two-layer Two-layer	Stiff	Medium	L	No No	MW S	****	•••	
*	Civetta	Trekking	815	Two-layer	Stiff	Medium	L	No	MW	••••	001/2	





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Upper material

The types and combinations of fabrics used in the upper part of the boot can be be-wildering. To simplify things for this survey: if an upper is entirely made of leather, it is rated as having a leather upper. Uppers made from synthetics (such as Cordura) and leather are rated as having a 'combination' of both. Refer to 'Points to watch' to read about the different types.

Synthetic waterproof lining

Some boots are waterproof because of the fabric used—usually leather, which can often be treated—and the way the materials are cut and sewn together. Other boots have a built-in synthetic waterproof lining to prevent water from penetrating to the foot.

Lact

As mentioned previously, everyone's feet are different-not only in size, but also in shape. A number of manufacturers try to shape a number of manufacturers try to suit as many people's feet as possible by making their boots in different fittings or a last. Narrow and wider feets not be width of the boot. (Women's feet are apparently the narrower than men's, and women have lower calves.) If a boot is made in many different last is it some likely to it is more likely to a last of the suit of th

Durability/protection

The durability/protection rating refers to the number of years the boot is expected to give satisfactory use, as well as to the protection if will give to your precious feet. Generally, full-grain leather boots with good, chunky dual-density rubber soles are going to last for several years of hard walking. Boots constructed of synthetic uppers and soles are going to plar tole enough protection for easier walking for at least two years.

Value

'Value' takes into account the boot's durability/protection, the quality of construction and the materials used. Of course, the price always plays a large part in determining this prickly issue.

Approx price

This is what you could expect to pay in outdoors shops in the major capital cities. We checked the manufacturer's distributor's recommended retail price against the price tags in the shops during mid-1999. An average price has been listed in cases where prices have differed.

Stephen Down first contributed to Wild in issue 49. He has been a keen bushwalker since the age of twelve. When he moved to Melbourne from Tasmania he became an even keener XCD skier. Stephen has walked and skied throughout south-eastern Australia, Europe and Canada and has trekked in Nepal.

This survey was refereed by John Chapman.

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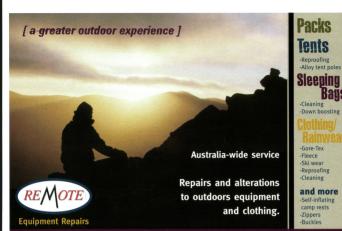








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THE ULTIMATE ADVENTURE SANDA

Self-inflating sleeping-mats

Magic carpets to dreamland, by Scott Drummond

THE HAPPIEST CAMPERS ARE usually those who manage a good night's sleep. And an effective sleeping-mat does wonders for camper comfort—along with dry socks in the morning, hot tea at the end of the day and blister-free boots. (See our other Gear Survey on page 71.)

A good sleeping-mat will help to keep you warm and comfortable during the night—two fundamentals in the wilderness (or even crashed out on an unforgiving lounge-room floor).

Our bodies largely depend on trapping and heating air to keep warm. The more warm air around your body, the warmer you'll be. For sleeping-mat manufacturers, this means finding a balance between too much air (consider the humble yet rather cold Lilo) or not enough (the tent floor).

Today's range of lightweight, selfinflating mats has it pretty well covered. Some manufacturers now offer a tapered or coffin-shaped mat so that your body does not heat more air than absolutely necessary.

The mats in this survey weigh less than 1200 grams. Heavier mats, while comfortable and effective insulators, are less suitable for adventure sports where weight and size are often important, if not crucial, considerations.

There are two basic types of sleeping-mats—the closed-cell foam variety and the self-inflating, open-

cell foam type. This survey rates only selfinflating, open-cell models. The closed-cell market has fewer models and much simpler choices.

Most self-inflating sleeping-mats are similar in size, construction and weight. Differentiating between these mats is difficult. Value and, to a lesser extent, ease of use are the primary variables.

The table contains three representative models of each brand surveyed: the lightest model; a longer, heavier model (but less than 1200 grams); and a mid-weight mat. The three models chosen were generally a lightweight, three-quarter-length model; a lightweight long mat; and a standard, three-quarter-length model.

As with all Wild Gear Surveys, availability was an additional criterion applied in select-



Lighter than air: Weight is an important consideration when choosing a sleeping-mat.

Scott Drummond

ing which brands to include. The mats surveyed are found in specialist outdoors shops. Some brands were omitted because they are not as widely available in these shops. Caribee, Nomad and DMH are three such examples. However, they all make good-quality mats.

Self-inflating sleeping-mats today provide warmth and comfort, but they do require care and attention. A punctured mat is almost useless. Follow care and handling instructions to prolong the life of your mat.

Dimensions

The mats in this survey are half a metre wide and up to 3.8 centimetres thick. Two-and-a-half centimetres marked the thinnest mats. A three-quarter-length mat is about 122 centimetres long: a full-length mat, approximately 183 centimetres.

Buy right

Comfort test

When inspecting self-inflating sleeping-mats in shops, place your wallet or an object of similar size under the mat to simulate rough ground. Change mats to compare the comfort. Don't forget to retrieve your wallet afterwards!

Repair kits and stuff sacks

Most have them, some don't. If a stuff sack and repair kit are sold separately from the mat, consider the additional costs; they can be high. Make sure that these items are available—preferably of the same brand.

Non-slip

A non-slip surface fabric is now the standard in sleeping-mats but there are differences. It pays to lie on each mat and roll around-preferably in a sleepingbag-to determine whether the mat lives up to your expectations.

Some surfaces are better than others.

Three-quarter versus

full length

Weighing up the merits of a full-neight mat againt a shorter sibling can pose a dilemma. On one hand the longer mat provides greater comfort and warmth-especially in cold conditionshowever, it is heavier and bulkler. If you choose the three-quarter-length mat, bear in mind the popular technique of carrying a piece of dosed-cell count to put under your lower legs and feet. Also popular, but less effective, is the rancost suffed with dofning at the the rancost suffed with dofning at the



HEXAGRIP

The new breakthrough technology incorporated into the Hexagrip self inflating sleeping mats gives a "hexagon" surface that actually grips you, keeping you from slipping or sliding off the mat while you are sleeping. It utilizes a patented process called SMT (Surface Modification Technology) that creates the special

"hexagon" surface, to provide extra comfort and enhance the nonslip performance.

The rugged nonslip nylon cover is D.W.R. impregnated to protect

against water and stains. Super lightweight bonded

open foam construction and easy-to-use

cold weather safe valve



Fully bonded construction, open cell foam core.

HEXAGRIP MATS use a patented process that creates a hexagon surface, providing extra comfort and enhancing the nonslib berformance

- Lite models with cored foam available.
- Models with in built pillows also available.
- . US patented and others patent pending.



Built with a nonslip fabric top and durable nylon taffeta or oxford bottom.

Proprietary reflective coating for unsurpassed thermal insulation.



		ď		Suitabil	ity for				222			
		Dimensions, I x w x t (inflated), centimetres	Weight, grams	Cold	Snow conditions	Comfort	Ease of use	Value for money	Stuff sack	Repair kit	Warranty	Comments
ıre On	e (Earth Mat) China	a					5000000					
	Lightweight 3/4	122 x 51 x 2.5	650		••	***	•••	***	Yes	Yes	Lifetime	Simple and robust
LINE LEE E	Standard 3/4	122 x 51 x 3.5	790		•• ¹ / ₂	***	••	****	Yes	Yes	Lifetime	Bulky but excellent value
1	Lightweight long	183 x 51 x 2.5	990	•••	•	•••	•	•••	Yes	Yes	Lifetime	Bulky and clumsy
Concep	ts (Summit) Taiwan	1										
	Lightweight 3/4	122 x 51 x 2.5	580	00 1/2	••	••	••	•••	Yes	Yes	Lifetime	Plain, simple and inexpensive
fig.	Standard 3/4	122 x 51 x 3.8	860	****	•••	0001/2	•••	•••	Yes	Yes	Lifetime	The heaviest 3/4-length mat surveyed
	Lightweight long	183 x 51 x 2.5	910	●● 1/2	••	••	••	•••	Yes	Yes	Lifetime	Meets expectations
tiach (Artiach) Spain											
	Compact short	120 x 50 x 2.5	580	•••	••	••	••	00 1/2	Yes	Sold separately	Lifetime	Good but hard to fit into stuff sack
Astroc	Regular medium	160 x 50 x 3.5	880	••••	001/2	•••	•••	000 1/2	Yes	As above	Lifetime	New mid-length
	Regular long	185 x 50 x 3.5	1080	••••	001/2	•••	••	•••	Yes	As above	Lifetime	Full length, reasonably thick; heaviest mat surveyed
Desig	ns (Therm-a-Rest)	USA										
Desig	Ultra Lite 3/4	119 x 51 x 2.5	430	•• 1/2	• 1/2	00 1/2	••••	••	Sold separately	Sold separately	Lifetime on materials and repairs	Lightest mat surveyed. Make sure that it doesn't leave you cold
	Standard 3/4	119 x 51 x 3.8	615	****	•• ¹ / ₂	****	••••	●● 1/2	As above	As above	As above	Excellent
	Ultra Lite	183 x 51 x 2.5	650	•• 1/2	●1/ ₂	00 1/2	••••	••	As above	As above	As above	Long and easy to use.
r (The	rmo-mats) German	у										
	Standard	180 x 51 x 3.5	1050	****	001/2	●● 1/2	••	•••	Yes	Sold separately	Lifetime	Excellent valve (like all Metzeler mats) but a little slippery
	Air †	180 x 51 x 3.5	965	0001/2	••	ee 1/2	•• ¹ / ₂	•••	Yes	As above	Lifetime	Similar to the Standard but lighter, with slightly less insulation
	Silhouette	180 x irregular width x 3.5	700	***	••	•••	•••	•	Yes	As above	Lifetime	A comfortable and easy- to-use coffin-shaped mat
in Des	igns (Mountain Ma	t) Taiwan			2002000							
4	Micro 3/4	122 x 51 x 2.5	627	***	••	••	••	•••	Yes	Yes	MDG	Plain and functional
	Regular 3/4	122 x 51 x 3.7	810	****	•••	•• 1/2	•••	••••	Yes	Yes	MDG	Good quality, excellent value
	Micro long	183 x 51 x 2.5	965	•••	••	••	•	•••	Yes	Yes	MDG	Hard to fit into stuff sack
ec (He	xagrip) USA											
	Light 3/4 ¶	122 x 51 x 2.5	540	•••	••	•••	•••	••	Sold separately	Sold separately	Limited lifetime	Textured, non-slip surface in hexagonal pattern. Has roll-strap
	Standard 3/4 † ¶	122 x 51 x 3.8	770	na	na	na	na	na	As above	As above	As above	
11/11	Light long † ¶	183 x 51 x 2.5	860	na	na	na	na	na	As above	As above	As above	



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Pack size (cm) L x diam: 22 x 14

40D 240T Ripstop nylon taffeta Soft-hand Micro polyester Ultralite model 700 900 1300 1100 Total weight (kg): 0.90 1.10 1.40 155 Fill weight (gm/m²): 2 x 100 top 2 x 150 top 1 x 100 2 x 175 top 1 x 100 bottom 1 x 100 bottom 1 x 150 bottom Temp rating (°C): 0 -10 -12 Comfort rating: +25 to +5 +25 to 0 +15 to -5 +25 to -8 Length (cm): 225 225 225 225 Chest width (cm): 80 80 80 80 Foot width (cm): 50 50 50

28 x 16

29 x 18

27 x 16 Ansco Pty Ltd, 11b Northland Home Centre, Gower Street, Preston, Vic 3072 Phone: 1800 333 645 Fax: (03) 9471 1600 Email: ansco@ansco.com.au

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Weight

Manufactures used to make thinner or shorter mats to achieve a lighter product, but with a reduction in confort and performance. Today's coring techniques with chine-stamped holes in a mat's foam's allow manufacturers to shave weight and reducantly specification. Note: Weights were a mat's packed volume without significantly affecting performance. Note: Weights were provided by the manufacturers' distributors.

Closed-cell foam mats

For a fraction of the cost of a self-inflating mat, a closed-cell foam mat (why are they usually blue?) gives durability, insulation, longevity and versatility. Unfortunately, these sleeping-mats are not nearly as comfortable as their self-inflating cousins.

Buying a closed-cell foam mat is easy, iffirst, there are very few models with the conwhich to choose. You are likely to be faced with a choice between two tooled-fashioned variety or a ridged/corrugated model. The ridged style is estep to comfortable and provides a warmer steep but is more expensive floabur. By your particular to your particular to store the control of the contro

When choosing a mat, buy one with a dense closed-cell construction. To determine this, hold a mat on its side and look at it in cross-section. Are the holes tiny or large? Compare mats. Go for the tiny-cell variety. They are warmer.

Some mats have roll-straps attached at one end. In my experience, straps rip holes in the foam at their anchor points. They also add weight. If you need straps, buy them separately.

In chilly conditions, a foam mat may leave you cold. To avoid the chill factor, place one foam mat on top of another. Alternatively, have the best of both worlds and take a closed-cell foam mat and a lightweight, self-inflating model to ensure a warm and comfortable bed.

Ten alternative uses for a

- Seat/cushion/lounge (particularly useful when snow-camping)
- Toboggan
- Bath mat (keeps feet off wet ground)
- Table (avoid sharp knives, however!)
 Emergency splint
- Mattress protector (use it under your self-inflating mat)
- Rucksack liner
- Groundsheet (lie on it when fitting snow chains)
- Telescope (roll it up and look through it)
- Binoculars (roll two up and look through both)

Conditions for which suitable

This is a measure of a mat's ability to insulate in cold conditions. All the mats surveyed perform well (are effective insulators) in mild conditions. As a rule, the thicker mats perform better in the cold. Thinner mats tend to strugel in the snow.

For the purposes of this survey, cold conditions are defined as all Australian weather conditions barring snow.

Be wary if you're planning to use a selfinflating mat in extremely cold conditions; any condensation or moisture trapped inside a mat can freeze, providing cold comfort (literally) for a tired trekker.

Comfort

How effectively does your mat protect you from hard and lumpy ground? Can you feel that tree root or river stone? Since the bulk of body weight is borne by the torso when horizontal, the comfort rating in this survey is not affected by the length of the mat.

Comfort, however, is a subjective measure and the ratings reflect the softness of a mat, how easy it is to feel the ground through it and its slipperiness. Climbing back on to the mat after slipping off makes for an interrupted and uncomfortable night's sleep.

Ease of use

Some mats are constructed more practically use the discount of the constructed more practically up. Others refuse to fit into the view of the construction of the cons

Value for money

Value is largely a measure of quality versus cost. Also, for the money you spend, are you getting a product that stacks up against the competition? In determining value, we considered whether or not a stuff sack and repair kit are included. To purchase these items separately can mean an annoying additional cost. However, it is important to note that some of the stuff sacks and repair kits are of poor quality and add tittle value to the mat. Make sure that the repair kit is adecuate.

Approx price

The prices listed in the table are the approximate retail costs based on research in outdoors shops in Melbourne and those prices supplied by some distributors in June.

Scott Drummond is a keen bushwalker. On one walk in northern India he and his companions trekked without sleeping-mats. It was so cold we slept on our packs each night. They were surprisingly warm but bloody uncomfortable?

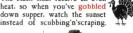
This survey was refereed by Brendon Eishold.

Evolved from the famous SIGG narrow neck water bottles, there is now a SIGG bottle you can stuff snow into while backcountry skiing or mountaineering. One you can mix milkshakes or muesli in. Also a bottle that is easy to clean. It has sturdy, seamless aluminium construction, which is internally coated for resistance to fruit acid, alcoholic and isotonic beverages. The wide loop lid of the new Wide Mouth SIGG can be easily grasped with cold or gloved easily grasped with cold of gloved fingers. Be first on your pond to try the anodised, one litre model. So hop in and get one.





After a long day in the wild the last thing you're looking forward to is the 'washing-up.' With a SIGG INOXAL Cookset your tucker will be ready pronto due to the special stainless steel/aluminium laminate. The lightweight yet strong aluminium rapidly disperses heat around the hygenic stainless steel inner surface. The black sides receive an even heat, so when you've gobbled 1 down supper, watch the sunset









JR WATER



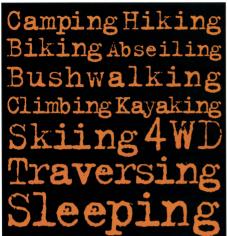
While the water in backcountry streams often looks pristine and clean, it is unfortunately hiding many invisible microorganisms, which are just as happy to live in humans. Some of these bugs include protozoa like Giardia, bacteria such as E. coli and dangerous viruses. So even if the water might appear crystal clear, it may in fact be very dirty.

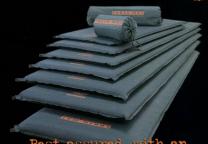
The PUR range of Purifiers can give you up to one litre of bug free water in just one minute. Most models include a carbon filter, which improves water taste and removes odours. See the entire PUR range of Filters and Purifers in good outdoor stores.

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The team at Ajays starts off by listening to what you have to say. If you've had problems with boots before, we like to check out your old boots. We will discuss with you what sort of walking you intend to do and advise you on the best choice of boot for the terrain.

The structure and shape of your feet is carefully measured with a sizing gauge, (remember them?) and then we hunt through our range of no less than 500 pairs until we find the perfect boot for you. There's no store in

Melbourne with a bigger selection. The fit can be further finetuned by having foot-beds individually moulded to your feet.



And finally, when you and our staff are perfectly happy with your new pair of boots, we present you with Ajays "Boot Fit Guarantee" that says Ajays will replace your as-new boots or refund the cost if you are unhappy with the fit. If they're not asnew, a percentage of their price will be allowed against the replacement price or refund. No one else does that either!

With service like this you'd naturally expect Ajays to stay open longer hours — and we do. We're open in summer from 9 am to 6 pm Monday to Thursday, 9 am to 9 pm Friday and 9 am to 2 pm Saturday, and even longer hours for skiers in the winter.

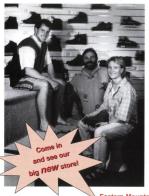
Just now we are clearing out a number of discontinued lines so there are some unbeatable bargains to be snapped up. And we give our "Boot Fit Guarantee" on every boot we sell, including remaindered stock.

So even if you're not exactly Cinderella, come into Ajays. We'll sweep you off your feet!

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Forget checking out blister remedies at the chemist — get smart: come in and see Jodie and get boots that fit right the first time.

Jodie, Eastern Mountain Centre's expert boot fitter, has perfected her craft over ten years in the business, including working with Phill at Ajays for three years. Now she's carrying on the tradition at EMC. That's how we can offer you the very best of fit and service.

Our mission at EMC is to equip our customers with the right boots for hassle-free walking. It means that we can confidently offer you our money-back guarantee of fit.

We carry a large range of boots to suit all kinds of feet, for all kinds of trips, whether it's a day walk in the Dandenongs or an expedition to Nepal.

And if your feet have bothered you on walking trips, don't hesitate to bring your old 'foot-munchers' in to EMC.

Jodie will give them an expert make-over by fitting individually moulded foot-beds and carefully stretching the leather to take out pressure points. You'll be delighted at the improvement!

EMC - boots that fit right the first time!



Eastern Mountain Centre, phone: (03) 9818 1544 fax: (03) 9818 1545 654b Glenferrie Road, Hawthorn, Vic 3122. email: emc@smart.net.au

Light on!

The Mont-Bell Pocketable Daypack earns big ticks for its convenience and compactability. This 200 gram day pack folds down into its own front pocket. Also available from Paddy Pallin shops is the MiniComp II Micro Orienteering Compass. This standard miniature compass comes with a base plateunusual for such a tiny compass. RRP \$59.95 and \$18.95, respectively.



The compact Mont-Bell Pocketable Daypack.

From Mont are the Nitro and Hotwire extenders-these sleeping-bag liners extend the range of your sleeping-bag, or you can use them on their own as an ultralight travelling- or summer sleeping-bag. Filled with 700 loft goose down, they weigh 585 and 685 grams, respectively. Available from outdoors shops. RRP \$179 and \$209, respectively. Speaking of ultralight sleeping-bags. UK company Snugpak has produced a synthetic sleeping-bag that can be compacted to fit comfortably on the palm of your hand. The Softie 3 Merlin weighs only 750 grams (lighter than all synthetic sleeping-bags surveyed in Wild no 68) and can be used in temperatures as low as -5°C, according to the manufacturer. For your nearest stockist, phone (03) 9489 9766. RRP \$295

For the gear freak-and, let's face it, there's one lurking inside us all-MSR has made the Titan Titanium Tool Spoon. To justify the purchase to your friends, tell them that titanium is strong, light and resistant to corrosion -and that the spoon handle doubles as a jet- and cable-tool for a MSR stove! Available from Bogong and other shops, RRP \$29.95

Odd bods

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0 0 0 0

Now you can stop using a piece of string to measure distances on maps! It is claimed that the hand-held Digital Map Measuring Meter from Dick Smith Electronics accurately measures the distance between two points on a map or other surfaces. (The line to be measured is traced with the serrated 'driving wheel'.) A magnifier and calculator are built in, RRP \$30.05

For a rainy day in camp, try these Travel Smart Travel Games: solitaire, backgammon,



A rucksack specially designed for your photographic needs: the Street & Field Rover Light pack by Lowepro.

trix Putting your foot in it ...and staying dry, by Glenn Tempest

Some people buy sleeping-bags with a Gore-Tex foot section to keep the bottom of their bag dry against the tent. There is a simple solution for people without such a luxury or unable to afford it: zip up your Gore-Tex jacket

Wild welcomes readers' contributions to this section; payment is at our standard rate. Send them to the address at the end of this department.

and slide your sleeping-bag into it.

For measuring distances on mans, try the Digital Man Measuring Meter from Dick Smith Electronics.

fits into a business-sized envelope and weighs 60 grams. Also available from Paddy Pallin shops is the Black Diamond Ascent Trekking Pole. Apparently its length can be adjusted as required, and it can pack down to an unusually convenient 60 centimetres, RRP \$9.95 each and \$84.95 each respectively.

Camera buffs will zoom in on the two-compartment pack by Lowepro, the Street & Field Rover Light. The padded bottom compartment can hold a large pro SLR camera with an 80-200/f2.8 lens attached, plus additional lenses and accessories.

The pack has a waist-belt, a sternumstrap and load-adjustment straps. A tripod can be secured down the middle of the exterior. Available from specialist camera shons RRP \$249.



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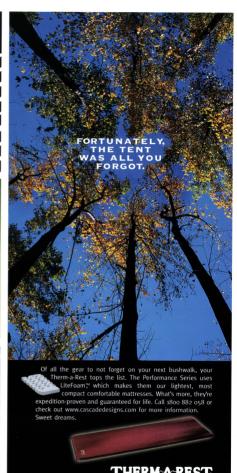
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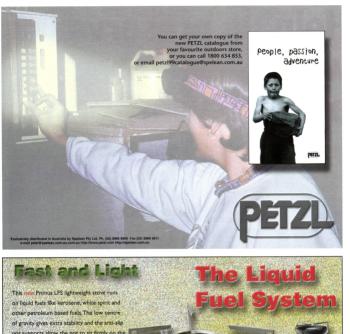
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Four environment groups secretly negotiated with Federal Environment Minister Senator Robert Hill and the Australian Democrats to amend the draft Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Bill. Hill is pictured in a South-west Tasmanian clear-felled coupe. Geoff Law

In the dying days of the outgoing Senate, the Australian Democrats teamed up with four environment groups and the Liberal Government to ram through major changes to Commonwealth environmental legislation.

From mid-May four environment groupsthe World Wide Fund for Nature, Humane Society International, the Tasmanian Conservation Tust and the Queensland Conservation Council-secretly negotiated with Federal Environment Minister Senator Robert Hill and the Australian Democrats to amend the draft Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Bill. The four groups considered that the gains for biodiversity protection outweighed the other weaknesses of the bill.

The Australian Conservation Foundation (ACP), The Wilderness Society and Greenpeace were deliberately excluded from the discussions as the government refused to budge on their key concerns—forests, greenhouse gases, land clearing and water allocations

The new law restricts the Commonwealth role to six issues of 'national environmental significance'—including World Hertage and endangered species—with environmental assessment of projects to be covered under 'bilateral' agreements with the States. Controversy focused on whether agreements between the States and the Commonwealth would allow the Commonwealth to walk away from stopping projects like the Franklin River dam.

Director of the Australian Centre for Environmental Law at the University of Adelaide, Rob Fowler, concluded that with the amended legislation 'it would still be possible...for a State government to approve a Franklin dam or a sand-mine on Fraser Is-









land without necessarily being in breach of an accredited management plan, bilateral agreement or the Act itself. In such circumstances, the Commonwealth would be powerless to intervene.

In an otherwise brutal parliamentary debate there were moments of farce. Democrats Senator Meg Lees, a former ACF councillor, told the Senate that Australian Greens Senator, and Australia's best-Known environmental activist, Bob Brown 'has not saved one tree in his life'.

Bob Burton

Otway logger gaoled

A logging contractor was sentenced to a term of imprisonment at the Geelong Magistrate's Court on 28 June and fined for violent attacks on conservationists in the Otway Ranges.

On the morning of 1 December 1998 logging contractor Colin Arbuthnot, employed by the Otway Logging Company, hit conservationist Matt Rees, from Warmambool, on the back of the head with the blunt end of a tomahawk. Rees received bruising and had to go to hospital.

An hour later Adrian Whitehead was assaulted in the logging coupe on Garveys Track (see Green Pages, *Wild* no 72). Police have not yet laid charges in relation to this incident.

On the night of 2 December 1998 Arbuthnot, with three accomplices, raided a base camp used by conservationists at Curtis Clearing. At about midnight Arbuthnot drove into the camp with his accomplices velling threats and smashed up the camp kitchen area. Two conservationists, young women from Warrnambool, were in a tent nearby. They heard Arbuthnot calling out threateningly. Arbuthnot's accomplices drove a car into the tent while the young women were still inside. The women ran out of the tent. They were lunged at by one of the accomplices. The attackers then drove off. On the way out they stopped and vandalised a car owned by one of the conservationists, smashing windows and panels.

The latest incidents occurred on the day the Geelong Magistrate's Court found 11 conservationists not guilty of obstructing logging operations on Wild Dog Ridge in February 1997, the charges being dismissed on the grounds that the logging was not lawful.

Árbuthnot pleaded guilty to attacking Rees with the tomahawk and was sentenced to three months' gaol, suspended for 12 months. He pleaded guilty to notous behaviour and criminal damage at Curtis Clearing and was fined \$1500 and ordered to pay costs and damages. Police told the court that they would charge Arbuthnot's accomplication.

The incidents occurred in the picturesque Cumberland River catchment, considered by many conservationists as a high-conservation value area. Logging in the Otways has been subject to an energetic and increasingly successful campaign of opposition spearheaded by the Otway Ranges Environment Network. Gee Wood-chips on page 95 for more on this topic.)

Earth Charter

Following the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro, a proposal for an Earth Charter has been developed. The aim is to present the charter to the United Nations for adoption as a 'people's charter' in 2002.

It is anticipated that the charter will be a soft law document with the same moral weight as the Universal Dedaration of Human Rights. It is intended that the charter be an inspirational statement of universal principles to guide the way we treat the environment.

Community consultations are under way in dozens of countries around the world, and the process in Australia formally began with a forum in Canberra in February to develop an Australian response. (The Federal Government has not supported the project; however, the Australian Capital Territory Government did support the forum).

The Earth Charter has great potential for shifting the debate about the environment. People still sidertack environmental discussion by challenging even the most basic concepts. An example might be the logger who says it is not really important if we lose a few endangered species. Relying on the charter, it is to be hoped that we will not have to keep discussing the importance of retaining endangered species but will accept this as a given. The Universal Declaration of Human Roths has had a similar impact over the years.

The charter reflects diverse concerns, Perhaps it should include greater emphasis on population control. Also, some of the great issues for Australia, such as native-forest logging, will receive little direct support from it. Further, the charter would be more powerful if it articulated an attitude to mining. Nevertheless, it represents a great opportunity to educate the public and move the environmental debate forward. To view the Earth Charter, see www.earthcharter.org/draft/ *Britim Walters*.

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Old park under threat

The conservation integrity of South Australia's oldest National Park is being threatened by a proposed new development which will require the rezoning of six hectares. Planned for Belair National Park are 30 so-called 'eco-cabins', 30 powered caravan sites and a 50-site camping ground—a verilable tourist villase!

Part of the area proposed for rezoning contains grassy woodland of high conservation value with more than 13 indigenous plant species with conservation ratings. Although grassy woodlands are one of the State's most threatened vegetation communities, conservationists claim that they are poorly conserved in SA.

Conservationists consider the development an unacceptable alleration of public land in a National Park for private purposes that sets a precedent for future acceptance of inappropriate development in other parks. In response to the proposal, conservation groups and members of the local communtry have joined together to form the Coation to Save Belair National Park.

Act now

To offer your support, phone the CSBNP on (08) 8357 5069, or oppose the proposal by writing to the Minister for the Environment, Parliament House, North Tce, Adelaide, SA 5000.

Forest flip

Having taken three years to write, Western Australia's Regional forest Agreement (REA), signed in May and accompanied by intensive State Government promotion, has effectively been disched. When introduced it was accompanied by a huge public outcry because it had failed to protect old-growth forest from logging. Groups organised their own advertising to counter that of the WA Government, rallies were held and politicians were inundated with letters and phone calls demanding changes.

Premier Richard Court finally succumbed to the pressure and agreed to review the RFA; his revisions have rendered it null and void. Logging of old-growth karri and tingle forest will stop in four years, and the State Covernment will work to avoid logging high-conservation value areas. There is also a promisted more away from clear-felling practices: Wood-chipping should also end in four

Politically, it's a very significant move', said WA Conservation Council spokesman Peter Robinson. But from a conservation viewpoint, there's little effective change. Logging of old growth goes on as usual and there will be continued indefinite overcutting of jarrah forests. We still need to keep up the fight to protect our forests.'

Act now

Contact the WACC on (08) 9420 7200.

Brickbats and bouquets

Brickbats to the Department of Conservation & Land Management in WA for logging rare yellow tingle. Found only in the south-west, 13 000 hectares are left of which 7000 hectares are old growth. CALM attempted to log 60 hectares at Swarbrick block in June. Local activists strung heavy-duty cabling through the forest, preventing equipment access and limiting the department's cull to 16 trees.

Bouquets to CALM for buying up pastoral leases and placing them into the conservation reserve system.

4M

On the wrong track

A UK company cancelled its long-running in MA in April after being informed that the State's environment groups are calling for a consumer boycott of jarrah. (Jarrah from the threatened native forests of south-west WA is used for railway sleepers). Railtrack, which runs railway lines in the UK, informed Bunings that unless it was able to provide timber which was certified by the Forest Stewardship Countle, Railtrack was no longer interested in buying the company's timber. It now obtains its timber from an FSC-certified source in Bolivia.

Forest timber 'underpriced'

On 3 Iune Melbourne's Age reported that the Victorian Government is hampering competition between native forests and plantations by underpricing native sawlogs and granting long-term logging licences, according to an independent review. The KPMG report found that the market price for sawlogs was between 30 and 60 per cent higher than the price charged by the Department of Natural Resources & Environment, It expressed concern that two-thirds of the forests set aside for timber felling are committed under 15-year licences that are rolled over every five years.

A mountain goes public

'Corang' is a Koori name meaning 'kangaroo', and the 863 metre Corang Peak, New South Wales, higher than the Pigeon House and dominating the western Budavangs, has a cycloramic view of the Budavang, has a cycloramic view of the Budavang House and the South Coast. Before 1999 this mountain—although within the Morton National Park—was privately owneed!



A gully of warm temperate rainforest in the Croobyar State Forest, just outside Morton National Park, south-eastern New South Wales. Croobyar is under a logging moratorium until the Regional Forest Agreement is completed this year. Andrew Wong

A campaign for the protection of two areas of old-growth forest in NSW is gaining momentum. Under a logging moratorium until the Regional Forest Agreement is completed this year, the Croobyar and Monga/Buckenbowra forests are a focus of both conservationists and the timber industry.

Croobyar lies just outside Morton National Park, close to the Pigeon House. Ten kilometres from the coast, it comprises warm temperate rainforest and is the home of giant stinging trees, coachwoods, threatened owl species and the

yellow-bellied glider. Croobyar is a site of significance in indigenous culture.

Monga/Buckenbowra lies between Deua and Budawang National Parks and is made up of both cool and warm types of temperate rainforest. Giant eucalypts, tree ferns and pinkwoods dwell in these ancient forests. This region is one of high biodiversity and is the home of at least 17 threatened species.

The ACT branch of The Wilderness Society is running regular guided tours; phone (02) 6257 5122.

Merran Laver

On 25 January a handing-over ceremony took place at the Wog Wog entrance to the park. A \$72 Old cheque for the purchase of the lease of Corang and its base lands was presented to the Minister for the Environment, Pam Allen, by Colin Watson OAM, the founding chairman of the Budawang Committee. Corang Peak was handed over to the people of NSW.

New park for Victoria

The May issue of the Victorian National Parks Association (VNPA) newsletter reports that the State Government has created the Terrick Terrick National Park and added 9500 hectares to the parks system. The new National Park is the old 2493 hectare Terrick Terrick State Park (near Mitlamo, west of Echuca), plus 1277 hectares of highquality, are native grassland.

In Gippsland Ellery Creek has been added to Errinundra National Park, and the Martins Creek and Goolengook Flora and Fauna Reserves have been created. Two areas covering 204 hectares have been added to Kamarooka State Park (north of Bendigo). The Grampians National Park has been extended by the addition of 19 hectares near Pomonal.

WA nature sanctuary opens

A significant non-government nature sanctuary opened its gates to the public in September, offering an opportunity to combine bushwalking with conservation in the hills outside Perth. Owned by a federally listed non-profit organisation, Paruna Sanctuary encompasses 1860 hectares of the Avon valley, stretching from Walyunga National Park in the vest to Avon Valley National Park in the east. Indeed, it forms a conservation corridor, linking these two 'standalone' parks and creating a natural unit along the river valley.

To book a walk, or for further information, call the sanctuary's booking office on (08) 9572 3169 between 10 am and 2 pm, Monday to Thursday.

lesse Brampton

WOOD-CHIPS

- * The Federal Government had announced plans to protect the World Heritage listed Macquarie Island, in the Southern Ocean, the VNPA newstetter reported in July. There are plans to place 16 million hectares in a marine park. Significantly, more than 35 per cent of the park is to be protected against mining and fishing activities.
- * Water supplies to Geelong and other cities and towns in south-western Victoria are at risk from plans to intensify logging in the Otways, the Age reported on 24 lune. Plans to clear-fell forests every 80 years could drastically cut water-supplies. The warning is contained in a report by the Otway Ranges Environment Network.
- * A deal between the Victorian Government and a developer to commercialise Wilsons Promontory National Park had collapsed, the Age reported on 5 June. The Minister for Conservation & Land Management, Marie Tehan, said that the government would not be signing a lease with architect Ken Latona.
- * The national Boycott Woodchipping Campaign encourages the community to boycott products and not to invest in any of the main Australian wood-chipping companies (AMCOR, BORAL, Kimberly-Clark Australia, Wesfarmers and NORTH).

Act now

To obtain an ethical buying guide, write to PO Box 2461, Fitzroy, Vic 3065.

* The Bird Observers Club of Australia is creating a publicly accessible education centre in Nunawading, Melbourne, to promote the protection of Australia's birds and the conservation of bird habitat.

▲ Act now

To make a donation, phone 1300 305 342.

- * A festival to celebrate the renewal of the human spirit through the practical restoration of our degraded ecosystems will be held in Hobart from 10 to 18 March 2000. Contact the Lake Pedder Restoration Committee on phone/fax (03) 6257 5292.
- * Throughout spring and summer the Concerned Residents of East Gippsland will host a series of ecology camps in the heart of Goolengook's wild forests in eastern Victoria. For information phone (03) 9787 7938.

Readers' contributions to this department, including colour slides, are welcome. Typed items of less than 200 words are more likely to be printed. Send them to the Editor, Wild, PO Box 415, Prahran, Vic 3181.



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Extraordinary Australian survival stories

The People's Forest: A Living History of the Australian Bush

by Gregg Borschmann (The People's Forest Press, 1999, RRP \$49.95).

Gregg Borschmann believes in the environmental wisdom and folklore of those who have come to know Australia's bush. The People's Forest draws on that wisdom to make a remarkable call for the protection of our wild places.

The book is divided into two parts: the first is a series of essays by Australian writers about the bush; the second, a series of



transcribed oral accounts from a wide variety of people whose lives have become involved with the Australian forest.

The essays are powerful and thought provoking; the one by Geoffrey Bolton is worthy of special mention. Taken as a body, these essays will increase our understanding of our forest heritage, and will be referred to for years to come. In detailed and personal ways, the writers explore the place of the bush in the Australian psyche.

Most readers will find the oral history section of the book irresistible. The personal accounts of life in the bush are alive with anecdotes, insights, humour and drama. Wild readers may be particularly interested in the reflections of Enid Rigby, born in 1907 and one of the early bushwalkers. The editor has added this gem from the Sydney Bushwalkers Club in 1931: 'the practice of unmarried couples sleeping in the same tent on official walks is looked upon by the Committee with disapproval

and is deprecated.' Enid's account shows how bushwalking led to attempts to save threatened areas (Blue Cum Forest in the Blue Mountains was one place she helped to save), and her long experience in the bush illustrates how attitudes have changed over the years. The many other accounts include those from artists, photographers, battlers, woodcutters, botanists, tree planters, educators, craftworkers, seed collectors, bush regenerators, horticulturists, and logging pro-

testers. The collective voices cry out for the protection of these forests, which have been, and continue to be, a source of inspiration to so many.

The People's Forest has been lovingly produced. The large, soft-cover book comes in its own protective folio, and the text is supported by evocative illustrations and photographs, many of considerable historical interest.

The format enables you to dip into this book at random, and invites you to return to its gems again and again.

Brian Walters

One Step Beyond

by Warren Macdonald (Hardie Grant Books, 1999, RRP \$24.95).

You're camped by a rocky mountain stream. Before turning in for the night you decide to take a leak. Being a good citizen you head well away from water. You're moving carefully up the slippery boulders when suddenly a huge slab of rock gives way, landing on your legs and pinning you in the creek.

This is the terrifying predicament in which Warren Macdonald found himself on Queensland's Hinchinbrook Island one April night in 1997. One Step Beyond records the author's desperate 46-hour battle for

survival, his dramatic helicopter rescue and the long, traumatic process of recovery and rehabilitation—a process which included both his legs being amputated above the

Macdonald was fortunate on two counts. First, in Geert van Keulen he had a willing companion who was able to walk out and

raise the alarm. Macdonald's narrative is interspersed with van Keulen's own version of events before, during and after the accident, adding detail and emotional depth to the story.

to the story.

Secondly, as becomes clear
from the descriptions of his
earlier travelling days, Macdonald was both fit and
experienced in the bush.
This undoubtedly helped
him to endure the lonely,
agonising ordeal on Hinchinbrook. Even more importantly perhaps, his love of

wild places provided a powerful sput for Macdonald to regain his mobility and return to an active outdoors life—an achievement which is celebrated in the closing pages with an ascent of Tasmania's Cradle Mountain.

Written in a direct, conversational style with flashes of larrikin humour and a passion for the natural world, this is a tale of triumph over adversity with great resonance for all Wild readers.

Quentin Chester

Survival: The inspirational story of the Thredbo disaster's sole survivor

by Stuart Diver with Simon Bouda (Pan Macmillan, 1999, \$24.95).

Stuart Diver, the sole survivor of the tragic Thredbo landslide on 30 July 1997, is no stranger to physically and mentally challenging situations: when the landslide hit he'd had a life-long association with out-doors adventure.

Wild readers will be able to identify with Diver's love for the mountains, a love instilled in him by his parents. He was threeand-a-half when he put on his first pair of skis; at six he took part in three major walks in New Zealand with his family; when he was nine they trekked for 27' days to the



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ORIENTEERING

Everest Base Camp. Before the disaster he had become qualified to guide and instruct in numerous outdoors activities, and had nurtured a dream of setting up an outdoors adventure company

Survival is a remarkable story of love, loss and pain. Co-written with journalist Simon Bouda, it takes the reader from Diver's blissful childhood and his close relationship

with his beloved wife Sally, to the 65 traumatic hours he was buried in the landslide after Sally had died beside him

The book details Diver's extraordinary survival and rescue, the events that followed, his physical and emotional recovery, and his hopes for the future. There are tips on how all of us can survive 'life's landslides', several pages of black-and-white photos, and

an extensive 'roll of hon-

our' of rescuers and support staff Survival is a well-written and emotionally engaging book, and there is a lot that we can gain from it. Diver's inspirational story emphasises the value of family and friends. of living for today (but planning for tomorrow) and of never giving up. I thoroughly

recommend this book. Naomi Peters

Taming the Great South Land: A History of the Conquest of Nature in **Australia**

by William Lines (University of Georgia Press, second edition 1999).

Because conventional wisdom is often so foolish, it is good to read a book which looks freshly at the destruction of our natural environment.

First published in 1991, this book has been republished with an 'afterword' by the author which brings the story up to date.

Lines's well-researched work rigorously analyses the forces and arguments which have resulted in ongoing damage to nature. The author refuses to accept uncritically any platitudes about sustainable development, globalisation, and free markets, but looks for more profound values instead

At present Australia has the highest landclearance rate in the developed world, and, despite all the soothing bureaucratic words, more bush is being cleared than ever before. Understanding how the rate has increased may help to prevent the process continuing.

Tamina the Great South Land sets current practices in an historical context. As we reflect on what we have done to the country, perhaps we will gain new wisdom and learn to love and respect the land more.

RW/

BING

The Kimberley: Horizons of Stone

by Alasdair McGregor & Quentin Chester (New Holland, 1999, RRP \$45 hardback)

This classic Kimberley masterpiece, first published in 1992, has recently been re-



printed by a different publisher. A more eye-catching cover and minor text alterations improve what was already a beautiful production-an effective combination of a coffee-tableand natural-history type of book. Through their narrative and use of imagery Alasdair McGregor and Wild contributor Quentin Chester impart a great sense of wonder and provide vivid detail as they lead a journev through the Kimberley heartland. Visual impressions of the unique stone

country and rugged coastline are portrayed in photos by the authors and by the talented Rob Jung-as well as in McGregor's extraordinary paintings. This book stands out as an invaluable reference for one of the most dramatic and intriguing parts of Australia

David Waaland

Canoe Touring Map of Melbourne and Central Victoria

(Victorian Canoe Association Touring Committee 1999)

This free map is a general locational guide only to the popular rivers, lakes and coastlines in the area. It needs to be used in conjunction with a road map and the Canoeina Guide to Victoria (VCA Touring Committee, sixth edition 1988), which has more detailed information. It is a good overview of canoeing opportunities in the area for novices and for those new in the region.

Catherine Kent

Hattah-Kulkyne Map Guide

(Meridian Productions, 1999, RRP

This is a well-drawn, full-colour 1:75 000 map of the National Park beside the Murray River near Mildura in Victoria. The region is mainly flat, so the many blank areas of the map are filled with interesting notes. On the back are detailed 1:30 000 maps of the most popular lakes plus useful information about history and activities. A welcome improvement on previous maps.

John Chapman

Publications for possible review are welcome. Send them to the Editor, Wild, PO Box 415, Prahran, Vic 3181.

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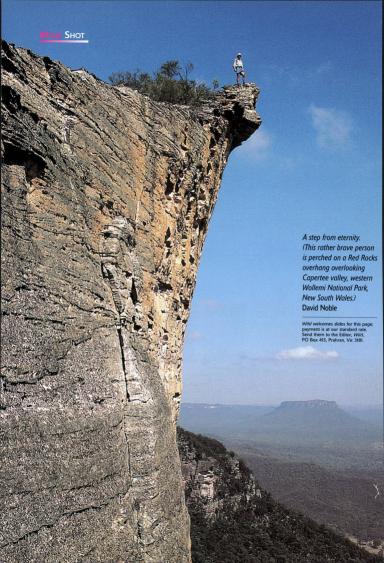
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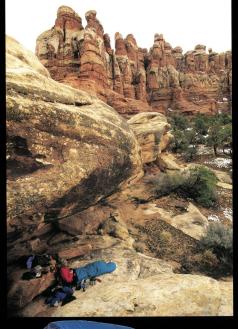
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